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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT AND MOBILITY IN
THE GOODFARE DISTRICT, ALBERTA

by



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A THESIS

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Off-farm Employment and Mobility in the Goodfare District, Alberta", submitted by Alison Margaret Gill in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Date 28th April, 1971

ABSTRACT

Off-farm employment is a well-established feature of the agricultural economy of the Peace River District. The effect of off-farm employment in relation to economic and social factors, with particular reference to its effect on mobility, is considered for a small part of this District.

Data were collected by means of a questionnaire completed during interviews with all farm operators in the study area. General economic and social characteristics are presented as a framework within which to consider the role of off-farm employment. Cross-tabulation and chi-square analysis are used to test the relationship of off-farm employment to various economic and social factors, and to determine any differences between two age groups of farm operators--those under forty, and those over forty.

Sixty-one per cent of all farmers engage in off-farm employment. Many earn over half their gross income from such work. In most cases off-farm income is invested into the farm. Except for those who work full-time at a non-farm job as well as operate a farm, most farmers engage in off-farm work during the winter months when farm work is slackest. Oil and lumber companies in the Peace River District, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories employ nearly sixty

per cent of those who work off the farm. Although off-farm work often involves leaving the farm for extended periods of time it is usually highly paid and for fifty-eight per cent of sampled farmers it raises their net income above \$3,000, recognized in this study as the "poverty level".

Off-farm employment appears, therefore, to provide the economic means by which older farmers remain on otherwise "non-commercial farms", but the hypothesis that off-farm employment would encourage the mobility of younger farmers does not appear to be true. They too, wish to remain on their farms if economically possible. By engaging in off-farm employment they are able to raise their income to a level comparable with that of non-agricultural occupations whilst enjoying the advantages of farm life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Off-farm employment is one means of overcoming the disparity between agricultural and non-agricultural incomes which exists in most countries where there has been rapid economic and industrial growth. Since off-farm employment assists the farmer to achieve an income comparable with other members of society¹ it may help to stabilise the rural population. On the other hand, it provides an opportunity for farmers to enter the wider economy and perhaps encourages them to leave farming. In the present study the various roles of off-farm employment in the rural economy of the Goodfare area in the South Peace Region of Northern Alberta are considered.

In 1961, according to Agricultural Rehabilitation and Administration (ARDA) statistics, 44 per cent of all rural families in Canada were considered to be living below the poverty level, that is with a farm valued at less than \$25,000 and gross sales of less than \$3,750 for farm families, or an income of less than \$3,000 for rural non-farm families (Buckley and Tihanyi, 1961, p. 34). The incidence of poverty in rural areas is greater than in urban areas where in 1961, based on a

¹Average annual income for urban families in Canada in 1961 was \$5,796 (Buckley and Tihanyi, 1967, p. 28).

poverty level of \$3,000 for a family with one child, only 27 per cent of the population were considered to be poor (Economic Council of Canada, 1968, p. 109). There are also considerable regional variations in the incidence of poverty and in marginal farming areas there are much higher concentrations of poor people. In such areas the consolidation of farm holdings and sometimes a change in the type of farming economy is advocated by the Federal government. The result of such action would be a reduction in the number of farms and the consequent migration of farm families to urban areas.

A decline in the number of small farms has been taking place in all technologically advanced countries and an increasing proportion of the total agricultural output is being produced by large scale operators, for example, in Canada in 1966, 55 per cent of all farms in terms of numbers accounted for only 14 per cent of agricultural production. On the other hand large farms with equivalent sales to this represented only 2.5 per cent of the total number of farms (Federal Task Force on Agriculture, 1969, p. 419). With rapid improvements in agricultural technology in the advanced countries, particularly since 1946, the agricultural labour force has declined dramatically. In the Netherlands, for example, between 1947 and 1957, there was a 35 per cent decrease in the agricultural labour force, and in England over a similar period, there was a 20 per cent decline (Nelson, 1968, p. 5). In Canada between 1946 and 1969 there has been a 55 per cent

decline (Federal Task Force on Agriculture, 1969, p. 16). The Task Force proposes that by 1990 for an efficient agricultural system there should be a further drastic reduction in farm population to about 3 or 4 per cent of the population, compared with 9.8 per cent in 1966 (ibid., pp. 9, 6).

Many farmers have already been forced off the land by economic pressures, and rural to urban migration has reached the stage where considerable problems of employment and re-settlement have developed. However, when considered purely from an economic viewpoint, migration is taking place at a much slower rate than one would expect. Much of the current research on rural migration investigates the question Nalson sums up as: "Why do farmers, when faced by adverse economic conditions, frequently not respond by migration out of farming?" (Nalson, 1968, p. 1).

Hypothesis

The aim of this study is to consider the impact that off-farm employment has on the mobility of farm families. It is necessary to consider this in relation to the various causes and effects of off-farm employment. A study of the nature of the agricultural economy is essential in order to determine the underlying economic causes. The effects are thought to be two fold. In some cases, off-farm employment acts as a transitional stage to full-time non-agricultural work and in other cases the opposite occurs as the farmer is enabled to remain on the farm when otherwise it would not be

economically possible.

The major working hypothesis of the study is that:

Off-farm employment impedes the mobility of older farm operators but encourages the mobility of younger operators.

In order to clarify this it is necessary to consider some related arguments.

1. Older farm operators either wish to remain on the farm due to socio-psychological ties, or are forced to remain because of economic or age disadvantages or lack of education and alternative skills.
2. Younger farm operators are more liable to place high economic gain above other considerations and therefore wish to migrate.

In both cases working off the farm for a period of time provides the economic means to either stay or leave as desired, and, in the case of younger operators, it also provides some job experience and awareness of opportunities outside farming.

Definitions

The terms "older" and "younger" need further definition. Considered in the present context, age is important firstly because it affects a person's decision to obtain off-farm employment and secondly because it affects his attitudes to migration.

For purposes of statistical analysis it is necessary to arbitrarily choose a definite age to separate "older" from "younger", although one must bear in mind that a person's

attitudes change gradually over a number of years. Researchers are often inconsistent in distinguishing between the age groups, "older" and "younger". This is partly because it is relative to the other variables being considered. Buckmire in his study of occupational mobility in Bonnyville distinguished three age groups: young, fifteen to thirty-four; middleaged, thirty-five to forty-nine; older, fifty years and older (Buckmire, 1966, p. 150). The Federal Task Force on Canadian Agriculture considers that after reaching forty-five, a farmer is too old for job retraining and should not be encouraged to migrate (Federal Task Force on Agriculture, 1969, p. 422). The Canada Department of Manpower and Immigration when assessing qualifications of immigrants however, gives demerit points for every year over thirty-five. For this study, forty is used to separate "older" from "younger". After this age, training for alternative employment becomes increasingly difficult and thus the opportunity to migrate is considerably decreased.

The terms "mobility" and "migration" are here used synonymously implying occupational as well as residential movement.

"Off-farm employment" in this study refers to any work done away from the operator's farm. This does not necessarily class the farmer as a "part-time operator", as defined by the Canadian census. There a "part-time operator" is defined as "a census farm operator who reports income from

agricultural and non-agricultural work off an operating farm of \$750 or more, or who worked 75 days off the farm, in the past 12 months" (Canada, D.B.S. Agriculture, 1966, Vol. V [5-3], p. ix). This differs from the United States Agricultural Census definition which classes part-time farmers as those working off the farm for over 100 or more days (U.S. Bureau of Census, Agriculture, 1959, Vol. II, General Report, p. 1192). The definition is further confused by researchers such as Loomis who in his Michigan study classifies "part-time farmers" as those doing any work off the farm (Loomis, et al., 1962, p. 644). In the present study any person operating a farm is classed as a farm operator irrespective of the amount of time spent, or money earned, off the farm.

Discussion of Hypothesis

Age is considered as the major variable in the hypothesis because of its effect on numerous other factors. Education is usually closely correlated with age and as Buckmire points out, advanced age and low levels of education are closely linked to immobility (Buckmire, 1966, p. 22). He also confirms the findings of many other researchers that social and psychological ties are much less pronounced amongst the younger generation (ibid., p. 61). This can largely be attributed to improved education and to the communications media. These factors have also increased awareness of job opportunities which is positively correlated to migration according to the research carried out by Gerschwind and Ruttan in Indiana

(Gerschwind and Ruttan, 1961, p. 23). Kinship ties have also been considerably weakened amongst the younger residents of rural areas through developments in transportation and communications systems which have greatly increased the "marriage hinterland".

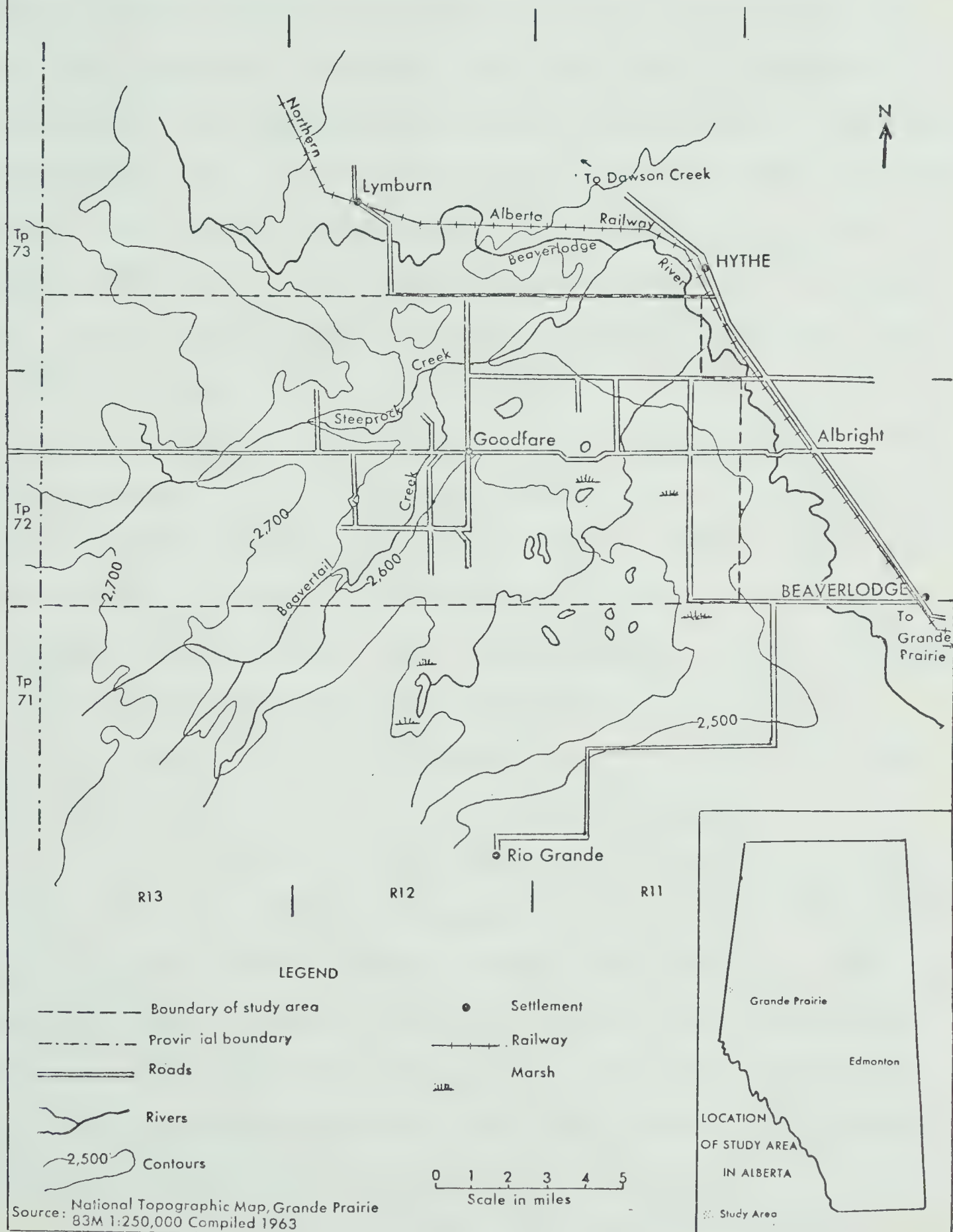
The hypothesis assumes that younger farm operators are more likely to place high economic gain above other considerations and are therefore more likely to engage in off-farm employment and eventually migrate. Often the decision to migrate is not an easy one. On the one hand, if the young farm operator has his own family to support he is not usually prepared to accept the lower standard of living imposed by the farm environment. On the other hand, he may find it difficult to economically dispose of his farm when the potential returns are compared to urban property values. He may, therefore, consider that rural poverty is preferable to urban poverty. However, it is hypothesised that in such cases off-farm employment is the means of accumulating sufficient capital to enable migration to occur. This is the "transitional stage" towards migration recognized by many researchers.

The Study Area

The area studied is the Goodfare district in the Southwest Peace River Region of Alberta (Figure 1). It was chosen because it is a low income agricultural area where off-farm employment is widespread. Initially the study area included only townships Tp. 72 - R. 11, 12 and 13 which made up

FIGURE 1

LOCATION AND PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE GOODFARE STUDY AREA



census enumeration area 206. However, after field investigation, it was discovered that the influence of Goodfare as a social and economic unit extended further to the north, and so the study area was expanded two miles in this direction. The only nucleated settlement within the area is Goodfare, a small hamlet of fourteen people centrally situated, and lying equidistant from the two small towns of Beaverlodge and Hythe. Beaverlodge is the larger with a population of 1,100, and acts primarily as an agricultural service centre. A government agricultural research station is also located here and provides employment for a few Goodfare residents. A military establishment near Beaverlodge has little effect on the local economy. Hythe, although smaller, with a population of 500, provides similar service facilities to Beaverlodge. The use of one or the other by Goodfare residents is largely determined by location. The larger centres of Grande Prairie to the east in Alberta, and Dawson Creek to the west in British Columbia are both situated about 30 miles from Goodfare and act as centres for specialized services.

The study area has well defined boundaries on three sides. To the west the boundary corresponds with the provincial boundary between Alberta and British Columbia. The land is unsettled for several miles to the east of the boundary although the Goodfare road continues a few miles west over the British Columbia border to the Kelly Lake Indian Reserve. The southern boundary which follows the Township 72 line is

marked by an unsettled area of muskeg. The absence of any roads running south clearly separates the Goodfare district from the Rio Grande district. The main Hythe-Lymburn road acts as the northern boundary to the study area and to the east the line is rather arbitrarily drawn along the boundary between ranges 11 and 10 although there is a slight diversion from this in the north east.

The hamlet of Goodfare consists of a general store which also operates a gas pump, a community centre, an Anglican church, eight houses and a recently constructed skating rink. The German Lutheran church is situated a few miles to the west. There are seventy-nine farm families, and seven non-farm families in the area. Eight other families living in Beaverlodge or Hythe also operate farms in the study area.

The area was chosen for study mainly because of its marginal nature in terms of agriculture. The Grey Wooded soils are largely loams and clay loams which are classed by the Soil Survey of Alberta as fairly good arable soils (Odynsky, et al., 1961, p. 59). However, adverse climatic conditions combined with this type of soil largely explain why the local District Agriculturalist considers this to be one of the poorest farming areas for the production of cereal crops in the Southern Peace (pers. comm. N. Miller, July, 1969). The farms tend to be small compared with other Prairie regions, nearly 50 per cent are three quarter sections¹ or less and

¹One quarter section is equivalent to 160 acres.

in many cases off-farm employment is an economic necessity.

The social and kinship structure of the Goodfare area also provides an interesting situation for the study of social factors related to the immobility of farmers. German settlers who arrived here during the late 1920's and 1930's have particularly influenced the social structure of the area although they are no longer a major ethnic group. There has been a considerable amount of inter-marriage between local families which has strengthened kinship ties. Preliminary examination of the postal directory lists as well as some personal knowledge of the area provided an insight into the social structure prior to commencing field study.

Concepts of Mobility

The factors causing the mobility of farmers are complex and interrelated. They can be grouped into the broad categories of personal, occupational, social, psychological and economic (Buckmire, 1966, p. 11). Due to the great number of variables related to reasons for off-farm migration it has been difficult to study the importance of any one factor and studies have often been contradictory for this very reason. Many studies have been carried out in the United States where the immobility of low-income farmers is a widespread phenomenon.

Some of the variables generally associated with immobility are old age, low educational levels, lack of alternative skills, and a sense of security on the farm. In all

studies it is recognized that it is not economic gain alone that governs whether or not a farmer will migrate. Psychological reasons are often given as an explanation for immobility. Hill, for example, in a study in Iowa, could find little difference in the characteristics of age, education, family size and economic level between those farm operators who remained on the farm and those who left. He thus concluded that the answer must lie "not in the environment but in the interpretation of the environment" (Hill, 1962, p. 425). Buckmire in his study in the Bonnyville area of Alberta also used psychological factors as an explanation for otherwise unaccountable actions. He stated that a strong attachment to farming hindered migration (Buckmire, 1966, p. 119).

Concepts of Off-farm Employment

In the United States interest in off-farm employment has developed considerably since the early 1950's as it has become an increasingly important factor in the lives of many low-income farmers. Agricultural economists have been interested in the effect that part-time work off the farm has on the farm economy, for example Loomis, McKee and Bonnen's study of the role of part-time farming in Southern Michigan (Loomis, et al., 1962) and Thompson's study in Kentucky (Thompson, 1964). Loomis et al. did, however, also consider the motivation of farmers in acquiring off-farm work which in turn related to their potential mobility. They investigated whether farmers were using off-farm work as a means of

expanding their farming activities, or as a means of gradually easing out of farming, or whether or not they considered it to be a permanent way of life. As two-thirds of the respondents replied that they intended to continue doing off-farm work as well as farming, it was concluded from the study that in this area of Southern Michigan, off-farm employment was a way of life. Guither however in a study in Illinois reached a different conclusion and recognised off-farm employment in that area as a transitional stage to full-time non-agricultural employment (Guither, 1963). An investigation by Fliegel (1959), is even more inconclusive as to the role of off-farm employment. Recognizing that those who engaged in off-farm employment had higher aspirations than those who did not, he concluded that it did not necessarily follow that the former were more likely to migrate (Fliegel, 1959). It would appear that one major question which remains unanswered concerns the significance of off-farm employment in relation to the mobility of the farmer. In other words, is it a step towards full-time farming or a step out of farming completely? Past research has shown examples where both these situations have resulted, and if this is the case then one must also consider other factors which are influential in the decision to migrate. Another problem as yet unanswered is why some farmers respond to a low income situation by obtaining off-farm employment whilst others in a similar financial situation do not.

Other questions concerning the type of off-farm employment and the distance travelled to work depend on the location of farms in relation to industrial development and urban centres. In the United States and Western Europe, areas which are highly urbanized, most studies relate to marginal farming areas adjacent to industry. In the Michigan study by Loomis et al. 75 per cent of the part-time farmers worked all year round and a large proportion of these were engaged in factory work (Loomis, et al., 1962). Alleger's work in Florida also considered the availability of local industrial employment (Alleger, 1964), as did Beegle and Halsted's study in Michigan (Beegle and Halsted, 1957).

In more remote areas where there is little industrial development the nature of off-farm employment is different. Seasonal work is usually more important and often it is necessary to travel considerable distances and thus be absent from the farm for a period of weeks or even months at a time. In such a situation the farm economy must be structured to accomodate other employment. In the coastal areas of Newfoundland, for example, fishing is combined with farming as has been traditional in many of the Atlantic Coastlands of Western Europe. In the agricultural fringe areas of Alberta, including those in the Peace River, a distinct pattern of farm and non-farm work has developed. The absence of nearby industrial developments often necessitates travelling considerable distances to obtain employment. However, as it is not possible to work the land for an extensive period during the

winter months, this situation is quite feasible particularly with an arable farm operation.

Buckmire's research on occupational mobility in the Bonnyville area of Alberta included a consideration of off-farm employment and is one of the few relevant studies on this topic in Alberta. He found that 40 per cent of farm operators in Bonnyville were engaged in off-farm employment. On the whole this was as unskilled labour during the winter months (Buckmire, 1966, p. 69). The majority of studies concerned with the Peace River district have tended to be general considerations of historical and agricultural aspects. However, recent research such as the theses produced by Marriott and Lamont consider migrational trends within the area. (Marriott, 1969, Lamont, 1970)

Method of Study

Research for the study was based primarily on field observations obtained by means of a questionnaire. No sampling was necessary as the area was small enough to permit collection of data from all residents. Nalson supports this approach as a means of studying mobility:

"Such a study needs to be descriptive of the mobility of a defined population and of such a nature so as to make it possible to attempt an analysis of causal agents. This can be done by confining the study to a limited area so that the community and family influences can be observed . . . " (Nalson, 1968, p. 20).

Interviewing Procedure

Questionnaires were completed during informal

interviews which lasted from half an hour to six hours. Due to a slack season on the farm during June and July prior to harvest, it was possible, in most cases, to interview both husband and wife. Ninety-four interviews were carried out consisting of seventy-six farm families, three families living on farms but not farming, eight families operating farms but living in the local towns and seven rural non-farm families. There were no refusals to answer the questionnaires although two families were not interviewed as they were absent for an extended period of time. Although a total of 100 interviews would have facilitated analysis it was felt that to extend the area further beyond the sphere of influence of Goodfare would distort the data.

Prior to commencing the interviews in the area some preliminary preparation was carried out to acquaint the residents with the nature of the study. An announcement was placed in the local newspaper which proved helpful as did attendance at a farm sale in the Goodfare district. The most useful introduction to the local residents was made however by staying with a farm family near Beaverlodge who knew many of the Goodfare residents.

Organisation of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was organised into four sections (Appendix).

- 1) Farm details--this included data on the economics of the farm operation, the location and occupation of the

previous owner and farming experience of the present operator.

2) Demographic and social details of the resident population--this dealt with the family and educational background of the husband and wife and any children still living at home. It also included questions concerning attachment to the local community.

3) Migrational details--this covered personal, occupational and educational details of children who had left home. Their present residence, reason for leaving, and age on leaving home were recorded, as were the attitudes of the resident population towards migration.

4) Occupational details--this dealt with details of off-farm employment of both the husband and wife including the type of work and length of time spent away from home. It also covered income data and attitudes towards off-farm employment.

A record was kept of any additional general information which it was thought might be useful, especially respondent's attitudes towards the future of the farm economy in the district.

Further useful information was obtained from various official sources. The Canada Agriculture Research Station at Beaverlodge was able to provide comparative climatic and agricultural data for the Goodfare district and further information on farm economics was provided by the District Agriculturalist in Grande Prairie, the Farm Credit Bureau,

and local farm machinery salesmen. An interview with Canada Manpower provided some insight into the local off-farm employment situation.

Data Reduction

Data gathered through the questionnaire were coded and tabulated. Cross-tabulations were obtained by using Program CROS-4 (Flathman, 1968) which employs Yates' Correction for cell frequencies of less than five. Chi-square tests of significance were performed where appropriate, and the 95 per cent level of confidence was used as the critical value.

Structure of Thesis

The thesis is organised in a similar manner to the questionnaire. A brief description of the physical and historical background of the Goodfare area provides an introductory setting to the study. Chapter III considers the agricultural economy of the Goodfare district as this is the basic underlying factor in a consideration of both off-farm employment and migration. The demographic and social characteristics of Goodfare residents are discussed next in Chapter IV, followed by a fifth chapter on migratory characteristics of their children. Migrants (other than children of present residents from the Goodfare district) are not discussed in detail except in their context in relation to families still resident in the area. Chapter VI deals with the nature of off-farm employment. Finally the data gathered

are analysed, and conclusions are drawn concerning the relationship of off-farm employment and mobility. More specifically the hypothesis that age is an important determining factor in this relationship is tested.

CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Relief and Drainage

The Goodfare study area extends eighteen miles from west to east and eight miles from north to south. The relief is very gentle and in places slightly undulating (Plate 1). The land slopes in an easterly direction from 2,700 feet to 2,500 feet.

Major drainage is by the Steeprock and Beavertail creeks which flow in a northeasterly direction to meet the Beaverlodge River. There are several small lakes and areas of marsh and poor drainage particularly to the south of the settlement of Goodfare (Figure 1).

Geology

The surface features of the Southern Peace River District are a result of glacial erosion and deposition which removed all beds overlying the Wapiti formation and deposited glacial till. The Wapiti formation consists of sandstones and poorly stratified shales of the Upper Cretaceous series. However, this has little effect on the surface landforms as it is overlain with heavy till deposits. There are two layers of glacial till. The first to be deposited consisted of rather stony sandy clay loam. This was then overlain by

"lacustro-till" probably deposited in a glacial lake. In the Goodfare district this material is often gravelly or stony and of varying thickness which is typical of the marginal areas of the "lacustro-till" deposits. In the west of the area there are more recent alluvial deposits (Odynsky et al., 1961, pp. 22-27).

Soils

All soils fall within the category of Grey Wooded soils which develop under mixed deciduous and evergreen woodland vegetation on calcareous parent material. Two major soil types are distinguishable, the Hazelmere and the Codesa series. The Hazelmere soils are present in over 50 per cent of the study area, largely in the eastern half. They consist of loams and clay loams and are classed in the Alberta Soil Survey (Odynsky et al., 1961, p. 58) as fairly good arable soils (Plate 2). However, drainage tends to be poor and there is often excessive run-off. The soils are rather stony and require careful management such as crop rotations, including deep-rooted legumes, and the use of fertiliser in order to promote continuing profitable crop production (Odynsky, et al., 1961, p. 59).

Codesa soils occur in the western part of the area where the topography is more undulating. Like the Hazelmere soils they tend to be poorly drained and rather stony. They consist of loamy sand and silt loam which is best suited to mixed agriculture rather than arable cultivation. This is



Plate 1. View of typical gentle relief of study area; looking northeast from the road near Goodfare.



Plate 2. Grey Wooded soil, Hazelmere series found in much of the eastern part of the study area.

especially so in the more gravelly parts. The soil can be improved by the growth of deep-rooted legumes and the application of fertilisers. Most of these soils have not been cleared but where they are utilised it is mainly as bush pasture.

In comparison with the soils of the Peace River Region as a whole, these Grey Wooded soils do not rate very favourably in terms of cereal cultivation but are fairly well suited to the growth of forage crops.

Climatic Conditions

Climatic conditions have an important bearing on the fortunes of the agricultural economy of the Goodfare district. The majority of farmers rely on cereal crops for their livelihood and therefore need favourable conditions.

Despite its northerly location the Peace River District is surprisingly well suited to cool-season crops such as wheat, coarse grains, rape and alfalfa and they have been successfully grown for many years. However, due to certain limitations imposed by the latitude, notably a short growing season, and sometimes insufficient moisture, careful management and preferably good soil are also needed if satisfactory yields are to be obtained.

Precipitation

Detailed records of the climate are kept at the Beaverlodge Agricultural Experimental Station. Although there

are significant micro-climatic differences, general climatic conditions at Goodfare, a few miles to the west, are basically similar. Precipitation in the area tends to be very erratic from one year to the next. Drought during the growing season is a serious problem and although it rarely causes complete crop failure it does lead to greatly reduced yields. On the other hand, during the past ten years there have been several wet springs and summers which have caused serious flooding of creeks in the Goodfare district. Thunderstorms during the months of June and July are common, and precipitation during these months is at its highest. This favours crop development as moisture requirements during these months are also at their maximum, but, in heavy storms crop damage can occur. Due to the unreliable nature of the summer storms drought during these months is quite common, and although the average rainfall for July is two inches, in one year out of ten as little as one-tenth of an inch falls (Carder, 1965, p. 13). The annual average precipitation in the Goodfare district is 19.49 inches¹ (pers. comm. Canada Agriculture Res. Station, Beaverlodge) which exceeds the annual total for Beaverlodge by nearly two inches. Increased rainfall during seeding and harvest is a considerable disadvantage.

Snow cover varies from year to year but the average depth on the ground is 14 inches (Carder, 1965, p. 15). Chinooks are quite frequent and can be damaging to plants;

¹Average for 1948-1969.

in severe cases where the soil is bare, soil erosion may result. High winds, particularly between May and September, can lead to high rates of evaporation and in some cases cause physical damage to plants.

Temperature

Temperature determines the limits of the growing season. Frost is the greatest threat to crops in the Goodfare district. Its occurrence is controlled to a considerable extent by local topographic features. It is surprising therefore that although Goodfare is at a higher elevation than Beaverlodge it nevertheless experiences a greater incidence of frost. The reason for this is unknown (Carder, 1961, p. 104). The average frost free period (days with temperature above 32°F) is 101 days at Beaverlodge and only sixty at Goodfare. The average period free from killing frost (days above 28°F) is 132 in Beaverlodge and 100 in Goodfare¹ (pers. comm. Canada Agric. Res. Station, Beaverlodge). Figure 2 illustrates how much later in the spring and earlier in the fall these frosts occur at Goodfare than at Beaverlodge.

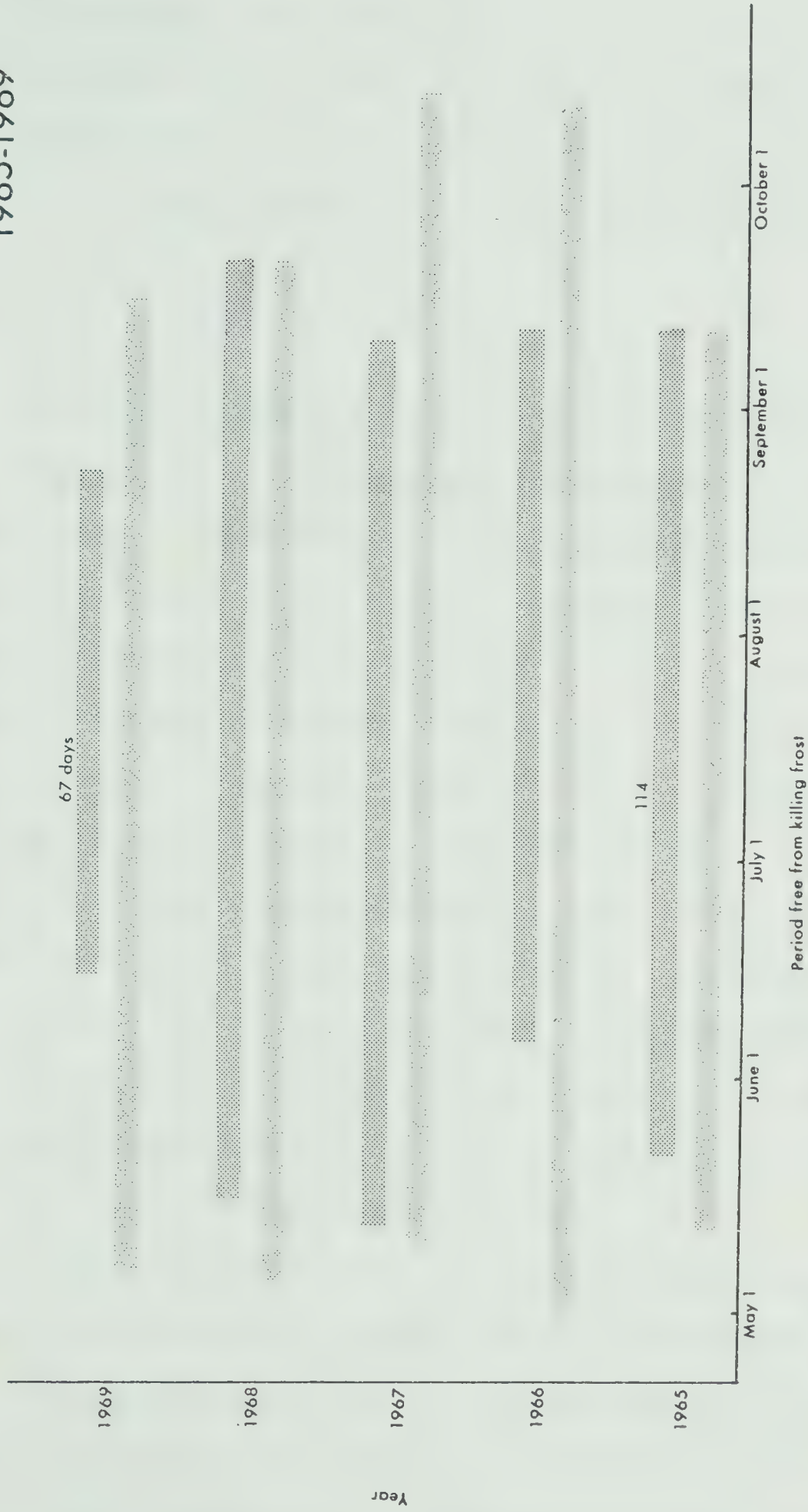
At Beaverlodge freeze-up of the land (that is the time when work on the land ends due to frost or snow) is between October 22 and November 20. The average date when the land is ready for work again is April 28. This "winter" period is even longer in the Goodfare district. To a certain extent the limited growing season is compensated for by

¹Based on records for 1950-1969.

FIGURE 2

PERIOD FREE FROM KILLING FROST (28°F) AT GOODFARE AND BEAVERLODGE,

1965-1969



long hours of daylight during the summer months when hours of sunshine are also at their maximum. At Goodfare the annual average mean temperature is 32.7°F, about 3°F. cooler than at Beaverlodge (pers. comm. Canada Agric. Res. Station, Beaverlodge).

Climatic aberrations

The "average" climatic conditions pose no serious problems to crop growth in the area but the variations from the normal can lead to reduced crop yield or even complete loss of crop. As Carder points out, "In regions with a continental climate extremes can be expected and aberrations lasting several months may take place" (Carder, 1966, p. 3). Precipitation is perhaps the most erratic climatic factor, although frost presents the greatest hazard in Goodfare. Late springs cause great concern as the growing season is so limited, and an unexpected fall frost can cause considerable damage. Hail storms are rare in the Goodfare district but a severe storm occurred over most of the study area in July 1969 destroying 80 per cent of the cereal crops (Plate 3).

During the period from 1960-1969, there have been at least five years when adverse climatic conditions have damaged crops in the Goodfare district. In the spring of 1961 there was a late spring frost. There was drought in the summer of 1963 which retarded growth, and wet weather in the summers of 1964 and 1965 caused poor harvest conditions. In

the summer of 1969 there was an early summer drought followed by a severe hail storm.

Vegetation




Only about two-thirds of the district has been settled. The unsettled areas, mainly in the west and south, remain as mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland. Patches of uncleared land, in places quite extensive, also remain on some farms. Only in the area adjacent to the Beaverlodge and Hythe road is the tree cover of limited extent (Plate 4). According to the Soil Survey of Alberta (Odynsky, et al., 1961, p. 23) at least one quarter of the land in this district has medium to heavy tree cover which is likely to cause serious impediment to land development because power clearing may be too costly, and a further 50 per cent of the area has light to medium tree cover which may cause some impediment to development (Figure 3).

The predominant tree species is aspen poplar (Populus tremuloides). Balsam poplar (Populus balsamifera), white spruce (Picea glauca), white birch (Betula papyrifera), willow (Salix spp.), and alder (Alnus spp.) are also common throughout most of the Goodfare district. In the south where the land is poorly drained muskeg has developed. Here black spruce (Picea mariana) and larch (Larix laricina) are the predominant species with a ground cover including such species as Labrador tea (Ledum groenlandicum) and ground birch (Betula pumila). In sandy areas lodgepole pine (Pinus contorta) is

FIGURE 3 DISTRIBUTION OF TREE COVER IN THE GOODFARE DISTRICT, 1961



LEGEND

-  Tree cover absent or light (presents little impediment to land development)
-  Tree cover light to medium (some impediment to land development, may require power clearing)
-  Tree cover medium to heavy (serious impediment to land clearing, power clearing may be too costly)



Source: Odynsky et al, Soil Survey of the Beaverlodge
and Blueberry Mountain Sheets, 1961 p. 23



Plate 3. Oat crop in the Goodfare district destroyed by severe hail storm, July 1969.



Plate 4. View looking east along Goodfare road towards Beaverlodge and Hythe showing area largely cleared of trees.

found. Little if any of the vegetation is climax as it has been destroyed by fire and browsing cattle.

Historical Development of Agricultural Settlement

Major settlement of the Peace River District began in the early 1900's as pressure on the homestead land to the south increased. The first settlers moved into the area around 1906 and by 1910 larger groups were arriving. One of the early groups of settlers to move into the Beaverlodge valley were known as the Burnsites, a religious group from Southern Ontario consisting mainly of farming stock. Many of them had purchased South African war scrip (given to veterans of the Boer War) from veterans who were not interested in farming. Thus for between \$3-500 they became entitled to file on a half section. In addition to this they were able to file a homestead claim on a further quarter section making a total of three quarter sections in all. The Burnsites group totalled twenty-nine including women and children. On arrival at Edmonton they were attracted to the Beaverlodge valley by stories of its beauty and fertility. They left Edmonton in April 1908 and travelled for three months by means of eighteen teams of oxen via Athabasca Landing, Peace River Crossing and Grande Prairie. On arrival at the Beaverlodge Valley they settled along the valley in open prairie where clearing of woodland was minimal (Truax, 1967).

Shortly afterwards in 1911 a shorter route to the

Peace was opened up known as the Edson Trail. This was in regular use, especially during winter months, until 1915 when a railway was constructed. The railway reached Grande Prairie in 1918.

The Goodfare area was fairly heavily wooded and it was not until all the open land had been settled that any advance was made into this district. Settlement advanced westwards from Beaverlodge and it was 1916 before the first land in the study area was taken up (Tracie, 1970, p. 138). Between 1916 and 1925 about half a dozen French families moved into the Goodfare district. The other ethnic group to settle here in the early days were Irish. Four or five families settled here and so the area became predominantly a Roman Catholic one. (Only two of these original families still farm in the district today.) There were no roads into the area in those days but new arrivals were aided and given accomodation at the "stop-over" house (Plate 5) until they found somewhere to settle.

German settlement of the area began in the late 1920's and reached a peak in the 1930's. Many of these settlers were German people whose ancestors had moved from Germany to Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria during the 15th and 16th centuries, but had nevertheless retained their national identity. The majority had settled first in Saskatchewan but were forced to leave during the "Depression". They moved to the Peace because land was still open for settlement and it was possible to "live off the land" as berries and wild game



Plate 5. Original "stop-over" house, built in the 1920's.

were abundant. The German influence at this time was considerable; a German Lutheran Church was constructed and most people around Goodfare spoke German. Many of the German families intermarried which strengthened the ethnic influence and as recently as the 1950's German was still spoken.

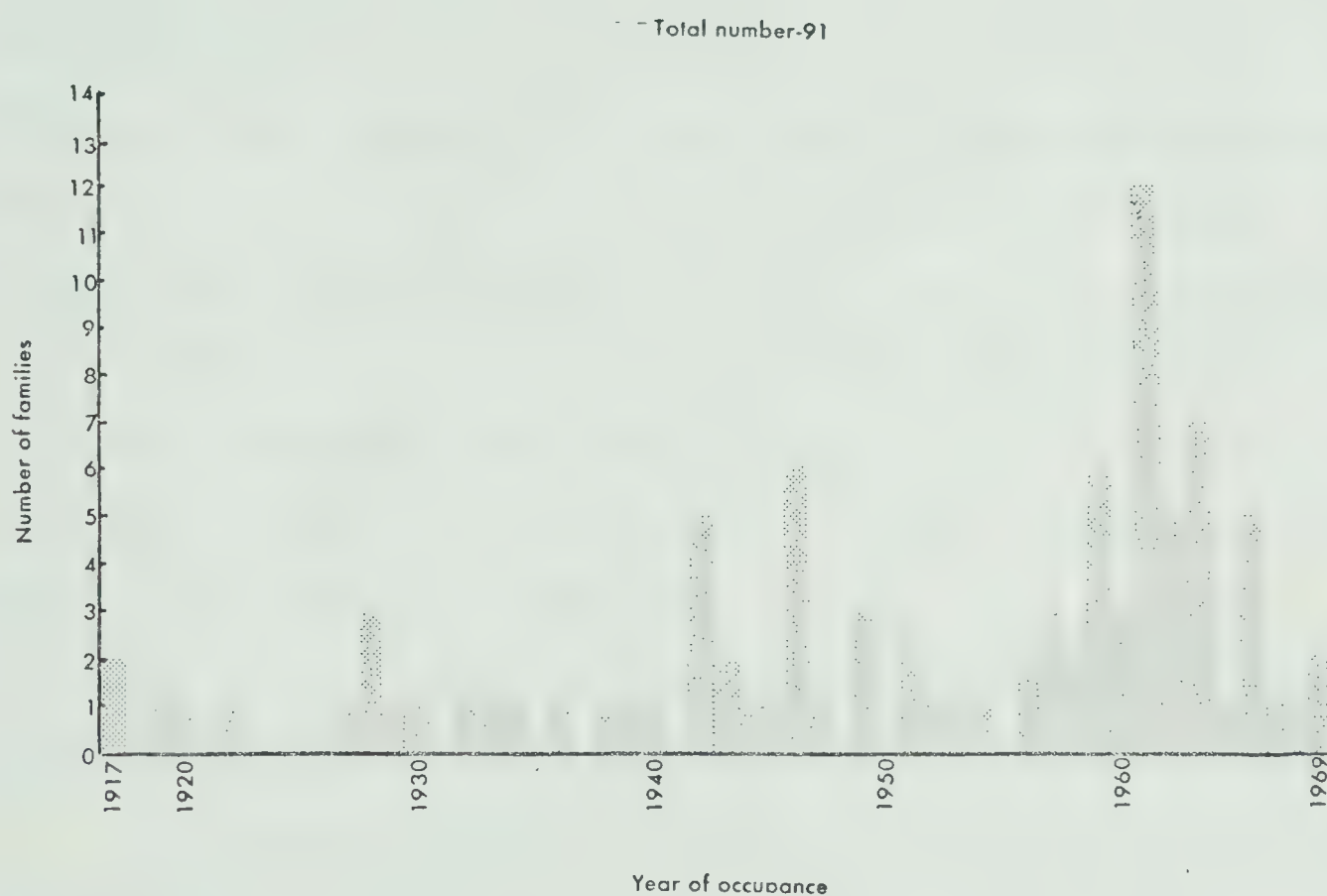
A second wave of German settlers came after the Second World War. These usually came directly from Eastern Germany as a result of political friction with the Russians who forced many out of their businesses and farms. In some cases they came to the Goodfare district because they had friends or relatives already there, whilst others were attracted by cheap land. The German settlers both in the 1930's and more recently, were on the whole financially better off before migrating to Canada, but political pressures had forced them to leave. Many had been small, but financially independent farmers, whilst others were skilled craftsmen such as carpenters, blacksmiths or mechanics.

A number of Scandinavian settlers also came to Goodfare in the 1930's. They arrived here via North Dakota and Minnesota, they too had been forced out by the "Depression". Many had relatives already living in the Peace, mainly to the north of Goodfare in the predominantly Scandinavian community around Valhalla.

Between 1959 and 1963, 40 per cent of the present farm operators came into possession of their farms (Figure 4). This reached a peak in 1961. Many of these operators were

FIGURE 4

YEAR OF OCCUPANCE BY PRESENT RESIDENTS OF THE GOODFARE DISTRICT



sons of the previous occupier but some were new to the area. This latter group came mainly from elsewhere in Alberta or other parts of Canada; they moved onto land which had already been settled and they were attracted by fairly cheap available land and the prospect of a promising agricultural situation. The majority had been farming elsewhere but mainly in areas where financial and population pressures on the land made expansion in the local area impossible. At this time there were several vacant farms in the Goodfare district, many of which had been abandoned for ten years or more and had become overgrown. Often these were sold at a reasonable price, some at less than the equivalent of \$50 per acre for cleared land.

There is still land open for homesteading and recently a few new homesteads have been taken up in the west. However these new settlers are not usually "serious" farmers but have acquired the land as a hobby, for a "sense of security", or for speculation. Figure 5 illustrates the present settlement pattern compared with that in 1961.

At present people of British origin are most numerous in the Goodfare district. The German element in the community is no longer dominant as the older settlers have either left or died and their children have lost such characteristic German traits as language. However, the Lutheran Church continues to operate and it is only in the last two years that services in German have been discontinued, although German is still spoken in the home by several of the older residents.

FIGURE 5 SETTLEMENT, WITH SOME CULTIVATION,¹ IN THE
GOODFARE DISTRICT

1961



Source Odynsky et al, Soil Survey of the Beaverlodge
and Blueberry Mountain Sheets, 1961 p.13

 Settled land

1969



Source Field survey

0 1 2 3 4
Scale in miles

1. At least 10 acres per quarter section cultivated

CHAPTER III

THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF THE GOODFARE DISTRICT

In this chapter the general characteristics of agriculture in the Goodfare district are described. The description is based on the replies to the questionnaire and field observations. Size of farm, type of farming, land development, farm management and finance, land values and farming experience of the operator, are considered.

Size of Farms

The agricultural economy of the Goodfare district is suffering at present from the disadvantages of small scale operations. This can be almost directly attributed to the nature of historical settlement. In the early days of settlement restrictions imposed by the Homestead Acts led to the creation of small holdings. Later, in the 1930's settlers from the Prairies during the Depression and immigrants from Europe were limited in the amount of land they could obtain because of the Homestead Regulations and lack of finance. There has been considerable expansion and amalgamation of holdings since then but even so of the eighty-seven farms studied, forty-two were three-quarter sections or less (Table 1a). The mean farm size was just over one section with farms ranging in size from a quarter section to thirteen quarter

TABLE 1a
SIZE OF FARM (OWNED AND RENTED LAND)

Land Owned and Rented	Acreage						
	160	320	480	640	800	960	
Number of farms	5	18	19	15	5	13	
Percentage	5.7	20.7	21.8	17.2	5.7	14.9	
	1120	1280	1440	1600	1760	1920	2080
Number of farms	5	2	2	-	2	-	1
Percentage	5.7	2.3	2.3	-	2.3	-	1.1

sections. Expansion of holdings has led in some cases to fragmentation of the farm because the settlement pattern of numerous small holdings has not always made it possible for farmers to expand into adjacent areas.

Twelve farmers whose farms adjoin unsettled government-owned land have been able to take advantage of leases at reasonable costs for grazing purposes (Table 1b). Three of these lease as much as eight quarter sections. This is a considerable advantage to the farmer keeping cattle as it releases farm land for more intensive use. A further eleven farmers, mainly those who do not have access to government land, make use of the locally operated community pasture for grazing

TABLE 1b
LAND LEASED FOR GRAZING¹

	Acreage leased								Total
	160	320	480	640	800	960	1120	1280	
Number of farms	4	1	2	1	1	-	1	2	12
Percentage	33.3	8.3	16.7	8.3	8.3	-	8.3	16.7	100

during the summer months. Four small holdings are rented out but only one of these farms is still operated as a complete unit. The others have been amalgamated into other existing farms. In addition to this five farm operators rent out small portions of their land to other farmers.

Type of Farm Economy

Seventy per cent of Goodfare farmers stated that they operated "mixed" farms, one had a stock farm and the remainder had purely arable operations. This is somewhat misleading however as about 45 per cent of farmers with "mixed" operations had only a few stock and were basically arable farmers.

Arable Crop Production

The amount of land under crop production in Goodfare is shown in Figure 6. Barley, oats and fescue are the most commonly grown crops in the district. Wheat, flax and rape

¹Not including Community Pasture.

FIGURE 6 LAND UTILISATION ON GOODFARE FARMS, 1969



are also cultivated by some farmers, but not extensively as they take longer to mature and may be damaged by the early fall frosts to which Goodfare is susceptible. Although it is difficult to generalise about the proportion of the holdings under crop production, on the average it is between one-third and one-half of the farm.

Crop production in Goodfare is somewhat hampered by the unpredictable weather and this factor combined with fairly poor soils results in relatively low crop yields compared to those in the neighbouring areas of Beaverlodge and Wembley. The early fall frost which usually occurs between August 20th and September 4th is especially hazardous to the yields of all crops. Barley yields are also affected by the acidity of the Grey Wooded soils; and oats, although more tolerant of acidic conditions, still do not yield well (Hennig et al., 1967). An average yield of oats in Goodfare is 55 bushels per acre compared to 65-70 bushels per acre at Beaverlodge (pers. comm. G. McLean, Beaverlodge, July 1969).

Summer fallowing is practised by 72 per cent of Goodfare farmers, mainly as a means of renewing soil fertility. Despite the efforts of agricultural advisors to discourage its use except as a means of weed control, and instead to encourage planned crop rotation, most farmers still cling to the old established method.

Despite the drawbacks of arable cultivation in Goodfare, about 65 per cent of the farmers continue to rely on

it for the majority of their farm income. Although most appear to be pessimistic about the future of the small farmer they seem reluctant to make the change to forage crop production and stock raising which the agricultural advisors recommend for this area. Despite the fact that in 1969 some had received little or no return from cereal production for two or even three years, a certain optimism that the situation would suddenly improve seemed to encourage them to continue crop production.¹

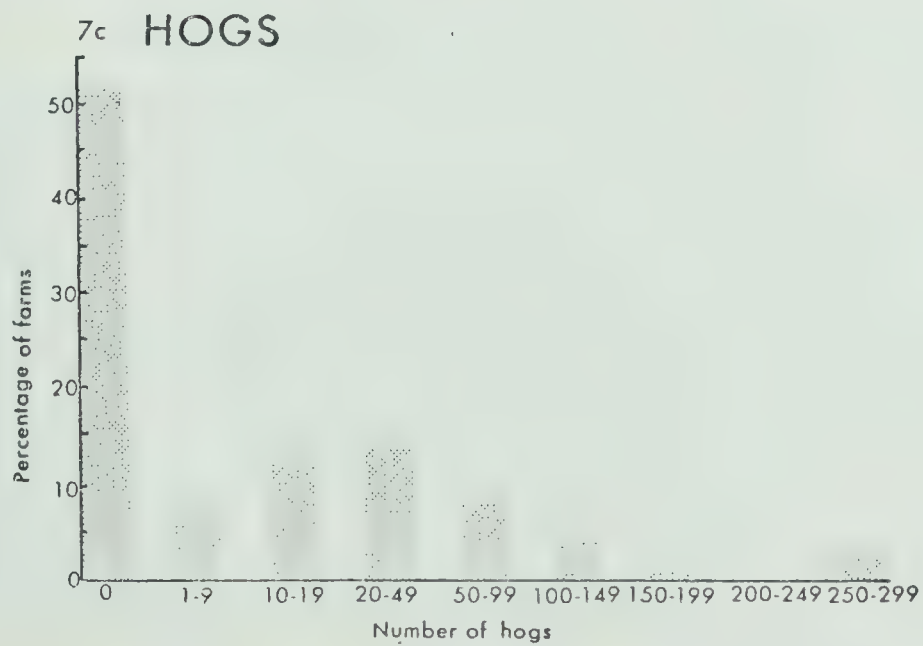
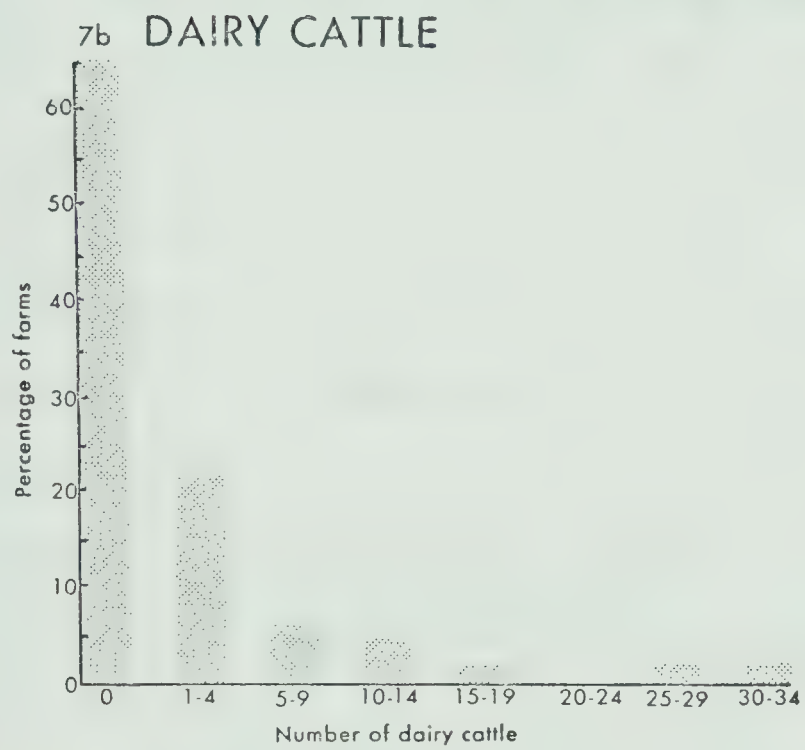
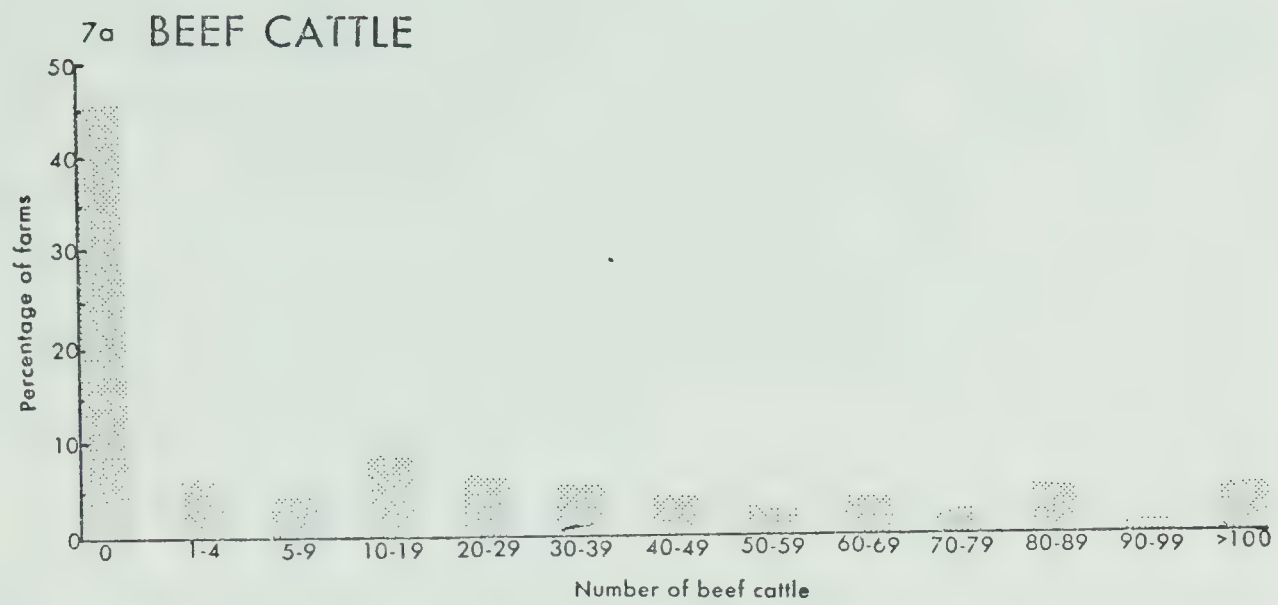
Beef Production

It is agreed, even by Goodfare farmers, that the district is best suited to stock and forage crop production, and yet, despite this, surprisingly few farmers base their economy on stock. Seventy per cent of the farmers have some stock, but most have only a small number of animals and rely on arable crops for the greater proportion of their income. Only five farmers have beef herds of 100 head or more and fifty per cent have herds of less than forty cattle (Figure 7).

The main area of cattle production is to the west of Goodfare where the land has more bush cover and is less suited to arable cultivation. Forage crops are more tolerant of the wet acidic soil conditions found here, and in

¹It is interesting to note than even in 1970 when the Government paid the farmers not to plant wheat because of a glut in the market, many continued to do so.

FIGURE 7 LIVESTOCK ON GOODFARE FARMS



particular alsike clover flourishes under these conditions and is becoming an increasingly popular crop. Sixty farmers have improved grassland (including land used for hay) but of these, 50 per cent have less than 100 acres. Cattle producers rely heavily on bush pasture for grazing during summer months on their own farm (Plate 6), on government leased land, or in the community pasture.

The locally operated community pasture covers a total of twenty-eight sections of thick bush several miles to the west of Goodfare (Plate 7). This land was acquired from the government in 1962 by a small group of farmers and after fencing was ready for use in 1965. Cattle are kept there from mid-June to mid-October each year at a cost of \$8.00 per cow and calf. There are now about 800 cattle kept there, and for every twenty cows one bull is kept. Use is made of the community pasture by only eleven farmers, as some farmers have adequate pasture of their own whilst others consider it inconvenient.

Some farmers expressed a desire to go into cattle production but there are several obstacles. Finance is the biggest problem as a fairly large initial outlay is required which at the present time many farmers do not have. At present, 55 per cent of Goodfare farmers keep some beef cattle although at one time or another as many as 80 per cent have kept cattle. However, with low crop yields during the mid-1960's and low cattle prices many were forced to sell their



Plate 6. Bush pasture on a Goodfare farm. Considerable browsing has occurred.



Plate 7. The Community Pasture.

cattle to get out of debt. One of the reasons why some seemed disillusioned with cattle production is that they have not persevered long enough to reap the benefits. Lack of experience is another contributory factor to the failure of some farmers.

Once a farmer is able to establish himself in cattle production there are several advantages. A major advantage cited by several farmers was that cattle are excellent collateral when obtaining a loan. Even if cattle prices fluctuate, and fodder crops, particularly in dry years, give poor yields, the cattle producer, unlike the arable farmer, is never faced with complete financial failure. A further consideration in favour of cattle raising is that less machinery is required than for arable cultivation. The cost of obtaining and repairing machinery is a major item in the budget of crop producers.

Dairying

Dairying is of little importance in the district. Although twenty-nine farmers keep some dairy cattle, 62 per cent of these keep less than four cows, and only six herds have over ten cows (Figure 7b). The main drawback is selling the milk. Prior to 1968, milk was collected in cans and taken to Grande Prairie but when bulk collection was introduced only the large producers were in a position to change their equipment to accommodate the new system. In Goodfare all those keeping dairy cattle produce only cream for

commercial use. The cream is collected twice weekly and taken to Grande Prairie. For this the government pays a subsidy of about 35 cents per pound for cream. The skim milk is used either for pig feed or else thrown away. Further drawbacks are the necessity of well kept buildings and the limitations imposed on the farmer by regular milking hours. In Goodfare, most of the farmers' wives gave assistance in the dairy.

Hog Production

Hogs are kept by 48 per cent of the farmers, and the average size of operation has between thirty to forty hogs (Figure 7c). Less initial expenditure is required to begin raising hogs than cattle and financial returns are much more rapid. For this reason many attempt to raise hogs as a means of making a quick profit. About 40 per cent of those keeping hogs did so only during the summer months, selling them in the fall. If hogs are kept during the winter, sound, draught-free buildings are essential, incurring further investment. Farmers keeping hogs only in the summer however, do not make much profit as the risks involved are high and the market unsteady. Hogs must be sold as soon as they reach a critical weight or else all profits are lost. It is usually only the large scale hog breeders who stay in production for several years who make much profit. Also as the Alberta Farm Guide points out, "it is necessary to be efficient in breeding, feeding, management and marketing" in order to be successful (Canada and Alberta Depts. of Agriculture, 1967, p. 145).

Other Livestock

Sheep are unimportant in the Goodfare district. Nine farmers keep them but only three of these have flocks of over fifty sheep. Few farmers are experienced in sheep production and quite heavy losses from predators, mainly coyotes, discourage most farmers from keeping them.

Poultry are kept on 51 per cent of the Goodfare farms. They are usually kept by the farmer's wife as a means of supplementing the household budget.

Horses are kept on many farms but are on the whole, for pleasure rather than commercial purposes.

Land Development

During the 1950's, a considerable amount of land fell vacant as original settlers reached retirement age or died, and with an unfavourable agricultural situation, much of this land was not resettled until the early 1960's. At present, however, there is very little unoccupied cleared land. Many farmers expressed a desire to sell their land and ten have gone as far as listing the property for sale, but, due to the current financial and agricultural situation, few people wish to buy small marginal farms.

Most operators are aware that expansion and improved efficiency of their operations is essential if they wish to continue farming. Seventeen per cent of the farmers have expanded their operations by renting additional land adjacent,

in most cases, to their own. In three cases, the previous operators of the rented farms, remain in the farm house whilst working full-time at a non-agricultural job. Renting has the advantage of not requiring a large amount of capital at one time, although in the long run it is expensive. The most common form of renting in the district is to pay a proportion of the profits from the land as rent. Government leased land is another common means of expanding operations for those who raise stock.

Most farmers attempt to expand by clearing land they already own. Only eight farmers had less than fifty acres of uncleared land on their property. These were in the eastern part of the study area where the land has been settled longest and the agricultural potential is greatest. Elsewhere, most farms have fairly extensive areas of bush. During 1968, 40 per cent of farmers cleared land. The scale of clearing operations varies considerably, some farmers prefer, or are financially obliged, to clear a few acres each year doing as much of the work as possible themselves. If however, a loan is obtained, then they are committed to clearing a large area. Clearing and breaking is an expensive process and it is often several years before the land is producing satisfactorily, and the farmer is able to recover the cost of cleaning. Because of this, there is a considerable risk in obtaining a large loan for clearing.

According to the Canada Department of Agriculture

publication Development of Alberta Bushland for Agriculture (n.d. p. 2), land development using heavy equipment can cost between \$60-80 per acre. In many cases it would be no more expensive to purchase ready broken land. Woodland in the Goodfare district is fairly heavy and often requires the "walking down" method of clearing using a raised bulldozer blade (Plate 8a). This method costs on average, between \$12-20 per acre; although expensive it is fairly efficient as stumps and anchor roots are removed, which reduces root removal and regrowth after breaking. The next stage is piling and burning which adds a further \$12-20 per acre to development costs (Plates 8b, c). After clearing, breaking with a moldboard plough and discs is required. This can cost between \$10-18 per acre for the initial breaking, and an additional \$3-5 for further working down. Root and stone picking are also necessary. After clearing and breaking it may be two to three years before the land is in a suitable condition for cultivation. In Goodfare it is not uncommon to see crops planted on land that has not been properly cleared. Plates 9a and 9b show brush that has been piled and burnt but not cleared further. Often this is due to lack of finances to complete clearing operations and occasionally the land is abandoned and reverts to bush (Plate 9c).

The fact that clearing of land is still continuing in Goodfare indicates a certain optimism on the part of the farmer, particularly at a time when expansion of cereal acreage

Plates 8a-c. Land clearing in Goodfare

Plate 8a. Clearing trees with a caterpillar tractor using the "walking-down" method.

Plate 8b. Piling trees into rows ready for burning.

Plate 8c. Burning.



Plates 9a-c. Land in Goodfare which has not been completely cleared (a, b). In some cases it may revert to bush (9c).



is not recommended. However, it was noted by a farmer who did contract clearing that during 1969 the demand for clearing was below average.

Farm Management and Finance

Management ability appeared to play an important role in the success or failure of farmers in Goodfare. Despite adverse soil and climatic conditions which hampered the majority of farmers about half a dozen farmers seemed to have overcome these difficulties and be making a success of their farming operations. It is difficult to assess management ability as it is not necessarily correlated with education. However, it was fairly obvious that certain farmers were keeping careful records of profit and losses and budgeting accordingly. At a time when it is necessary for nearly all farmers to borrow money it is essential that they are aware of how the money is being spent and how they will repay their loans.

In Goodfare insufficient ability to handle finance, especially loans, is one of the most severe setbacks to the agricultural economy. Loans are available from several sources. A comment made by several farmers was that loans were too easily obtainable, and therefore a temptation as a short-term solution to financial problems, although often in the long-run they aggravated the situation. Unfortunately it was not possible to collect data concerning the type and nature of the loans.

Few farmers borrow from banks as a down-payment is

usually required and credit is difficult to obtain. The Farm Credit Corporation which is operated on federal money, is the major agricultural finance organisation. This organisation mainly deals with long term loans for reorganising farms, purchasing or improving land and buildings and purchasing machinery and livestock. Most major loans to Goodfare farmers are from Farm Credit, and as one farmer put it many farms are more or less "owned" by the Corporation. Farm Credit carefully screens applicants and has recently tightened up on its requirements. As a result, during 1968 only 25 to 30 per cent of the applicants received loans (pers. comm., Farm Credit Corporation, Grande Prairie, 1969). Factors taken into consideration before giving loans include age, management ability, resources, growth potential and past use of credit. The most common loan is \$20,000 over 23 years at an 8 per cent interest rate. The interest on a loan like this is about \$1,700 per annum to begin with. One complaint is that farmers are often persuaded to borrow more than they intend to, for example, if they wish to go into beef production, they must also borrow enough for buildings and fences. Credit is very useful and often essential to the farmer but sometimes, often through no fault of his own, it can cause a farmer further financial problems. During the past few years poor crops, as a result of bad weather, have led to many farmers having difficulty in repaying loans.

Perhaps even more to blame than credit companies for

the financial distress of farmers are the farm machinery companies. Recently they have come under attack from the government for selling machinery at artificially high prices with high interest rates. This situation is further aggravated by some farmers who, for purposes of prestige, buy larger machinery than necessary.

During 1968, 44 per cent of the farmers in Goodfare obtained some new machinery. Combine harvesters are the most expensive item and due largely to the short and unreliable harvest period, (and perhaps to a certain extent, pride) most farmers own their own rather than share with a neighbour. Most combines are designed for work on extensive acreages and were not made to cater for the small farms in this area. They are therefore under-utilized. A new combine costs between \$12-20,000 and often by the time the machine is paid for, it needs replacing or extensive repairing. Most machinery companies accept trade-ins on old machines in place of a down-payment and this entices many farmers to acquire machines they cannot really afford. With interest rates as high as 20 per cent, the cost of the machine is often doubled before it is paid for.

Many farmers purchase second-hand machinery which is considerably cheaper. However, unless they are capable of doing basic repairs, most farmers consider it not to be worthwhile as a breakdown during harvest could mean the loss of a crop. About 12 per cent of the farmers had had some

training in welding, engineering or mechanics and were fairly competent with machinery repairs, while a number of others had learned by experience.

Farm Acquisition

It was apparent when visiting the farms in the Goodfare district that the method by which the farm had been acquired was a factor in the success of the farmer. Those who had taken over the farm from their parents were on the whole more secure financially. Twenty-three per cent of the total number of farmers had taken over from their fathers, and, as the area was settled comparatively recently, 70 per cent of these were under forty. In fact, of all farm operators under forty, 52 per cent had acquired the farm from their parents, and only 22 per cent were not related in some way to the previous owner (Table 2). Amongst those operators

TABLE 2

RELATIONSHIP OF PREVIOUS OWNER AND AGE
OF PRESENT FARM OPERATOR

Age	No Relation- ship	Parent	Cousin	In-Law	Other	Original Home- steader
Under 40	6	14	1	4	1	1
Over 40	44	6	0	1	1	8
Total	50	20	1	5	2	9

over forty, only fourteen had been related to the previous owner. It is important to differentiate between farms owned by an operator's parents and sold to him, and farms that were inherited. In only three cases out of eighty-seven had the land been inherited. However if the land had been purchased from relatives certain concessions were usually made. Often these were machinery or stock which were acquired with the farm at minimal cost. This assisted the new operator in getting started. The expense of buying not only their farm but also machinery and livestock when commencing farming causes many farmers to incur debts from which they have difficulty recovering. However, if some assistance is available in the early stages, the chances of success are far greater. If one considers only the more prosperous farmers in Goodfare grossing over \$10,000 per annum, then 75 per cent of these have had some help from relatives in getting started.

Land Values

The current price of land in the Goodfare district is about \$60-80 per acre for cleared land, compared to about half that price at the beginning of the 1960's. A number of farmers, however, seem to have an inflated idea of what their land is worth and value it at about \$100 per acre. This is the price which better land in neighbouring areas is being sold for. Several mentioned that they could not move until they could sell their land at an "acceptable price". As Haythorne points out, ". . . additions and improvements made

to farm property may be numerous . . . they may not have as much value to a potential buyer as to the present owner"

(Haythorne, 1960, p. 98). Recently large sections of land in the Rio Grande area to the south have been purchased by organisations such as Canadian Pacific for \$100 per acre. These are being operated as large scale cooperative units. Some farmers have become optimistic that perhaps a similar venture may develop in Goodfare, although according to the District Agriculturalist, this seems very unlikely (pers. comm. N. Miller, Grande Prairie, July 1969).

Farming Experience of Operator

Farming experience is related to a certain extent to management ability, not so much in terms of time spent farming as the location and type of farming. As noted earlier, Goodfare is best suited to forage crop production and cattle raising. It seems possible that one reason why some farmers persist in basing their major economy on arable crops, or fail in their attempts at keeping livestock is that they lack the necessary experience. About 50 per cent of the farmers were raised in the Peace River District, in Saskatchewan or in the Northern Great Plains of the United States, all of which are predominantly arable farming areas. About 30 per cent of the operators had experience farming in these areas (Table 3) and it is likely that their knowledge of livestock production is limited.

Agriculture in the Goodfare district, particularly

TABLE 3

LOCATION OF FARM PREVIOUSLY OPERATED BY FARMER
PRIOR TO MOVING TO GOODFARE

Location of previous farm	Number of farmers
Goodfare	7
Locally within 15 miles	10
Elsewhere in Peace River District	4
Elsewhere in Alberta	8
Elsewhere in Canada	6
Europe	3
Never farmed elsewhere	49
Total	87

in the western part, is definitely marginal. The physical and climatic conditions, the size of farms, the type of farming economy and the lack of management ability all contribute to this. This low income agricultural situation is the basic reason why for many off-farm employment is a necessity.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOODFARE'S RESIDENT POPULATION

Nalson states that, "the determinants of the mobility of farm people can be broadly classified as demographic influences, the home environment and the world outside the home" (Nalson, 1968, p. 21). This chapter considers the first two of these influences, that is, the demography and the home environment of Goodfare residents. The third factor "the world outside the home" is discussed in Chapter VI on "off-farm employment". Details of the age, sex, family and ethnic characteristic of residents are included as well as a discussion of educational levels and social participation within the community. The implications of these factors for off-farm employment and migration are only briefly mentioned as they are discussed fully in Chapter VII. As age is of particular relevance to the study any significant differences in demographic or social characteristics which occur between the two age groups (under and over forty years of age) are emphasised.

Age and Sex Structure

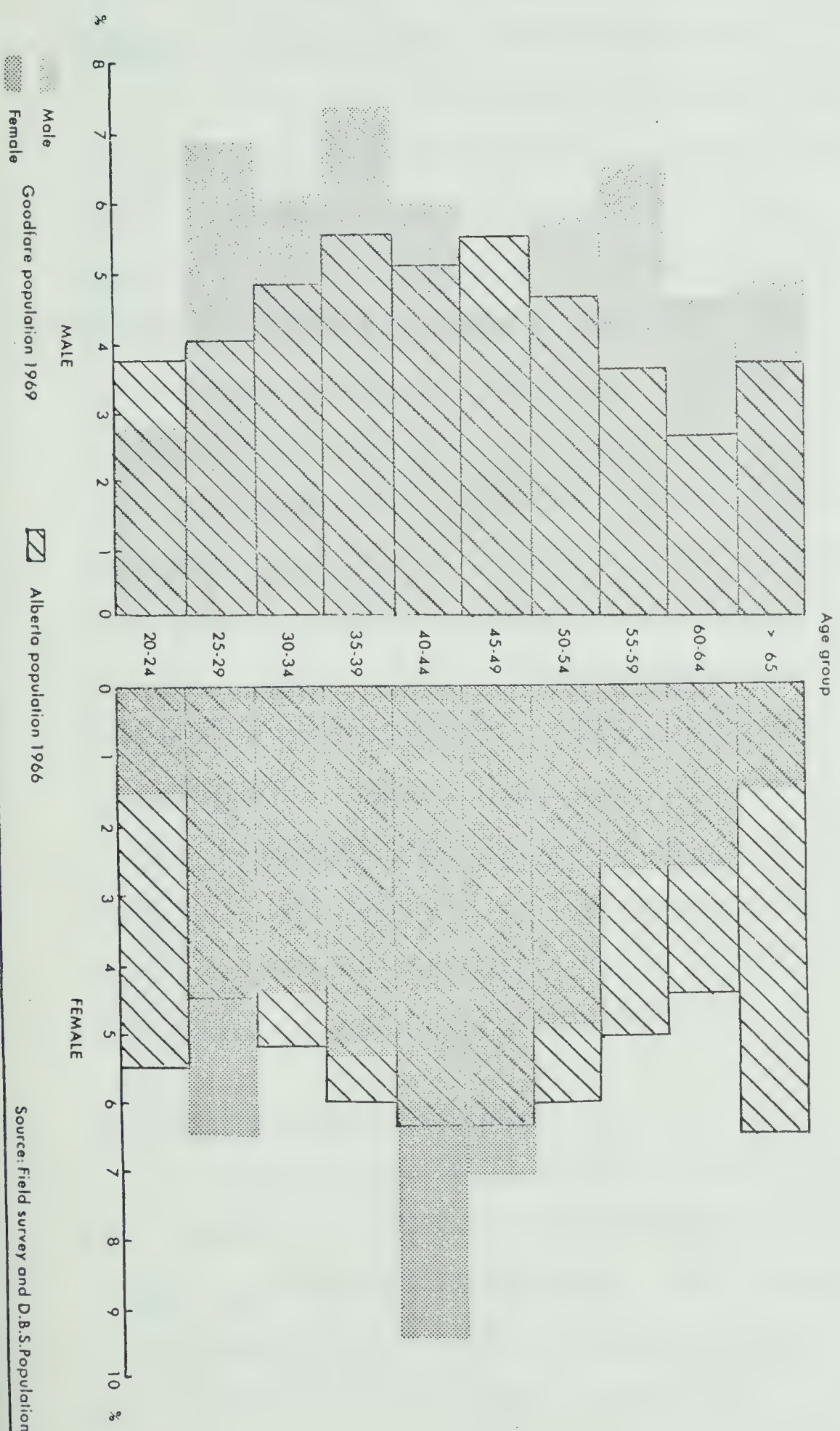
Thirty-three per cent of the male respondents in

Goodfare were under forty years old¹, and therefore if the hypothesis is correct are more likely to utilize off-farm employment as a transitional stage towards full-time non-agricultural employment. Fourteen male residents (15 per cent) were over sixty-five years old, and ten of these were still operating farms although usually in a limited manner. Wives were in many cases five to ten years younger than their husbands.

The age/sex structure of the adult farm population of Goodfare is shown in Figure 8, and compared with the rural farm population in the whole of Alberta (Canada, D.B.S. Population, General Characteristics, Vol. I [1-10], 1966, p. 20-29). It can be seen that in Goodfare there is a greater proportion of males in the over fifty age group than for Alberta as a whole, but conversely there are fewer females in this category. However, there is an above average proportion of women in the forty to forty-nine age groups. Two factors contribute to this. Firstly, there are four bachelors over sixty-five in the area, and secondly, several farmers over sixty are married to women who are fifteen to twenty years younger than they are. The ratio of males to females resident on farms in Goodfare is 114 to 100 which is less than the average for the rural farm populations in Canada and considerably less than the Alberta rural farm average

¹Male respondent is here synonymous with male head of household, and thus this figure excludes any male adult children still living at home. This figure would be the same also for farm operators. (There are no male heads of households under forty who are not also farmers.)

FIGURE 8 AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE OF RESIDENT FARM POPULATION OVER TWENTY YEARS OF AGE: GOODFARE AND ALBERTA



Source: Field survey and D.B.S. Population 1966

which is 122 males to 100 females (Canada, D.B.S. Census of Canada, Rural and Urban Populations, Bull. 7.1-2, 1961).

There are fifteen farmers' sons still living at home but only two of these work on the farm. The others have local jobs mainly at Beaverlodge or Hythe. In the two cases where the son is helping on the family farm, either the father or the son is able to engage in off-farm employment for most of the year. There are no single women living in Goodfare although there are three widows.

For Alberta as a whole a high proportion of male farm residents belongs within the forty to fifty age group. In Goodfare there are fewer farmers in this middle age category than any other ten year age group. This may be a reflection of the stage of development that settlement in Goodfare has reached. The majority of farm operators are either those who settled in the 1920's or 1930's and are therefore now reaching old age or else are more recent occupants who came to Goodfare in the 1960's and who have therefore not yet reached middle age.

Family Structure and Size

The structure of farm families is an important factor in the study of mobility, particularly in its effect on changing economic requirements. The average number of children resident at home in Goodfare in 1969 was 2.75, which is slightly above the 1966 average of 2.19 for rural Alberta (Canada, D.B.S. Population, Households and Families, Vol. 2

[2-10], 1966; p. 63-2). If one excludes families without children (four couples have no children and there are five bachelors) then 57 per cent of Goodfare families have a total of four or more children resident at home and 10 per cent have over seven (Figure 9).

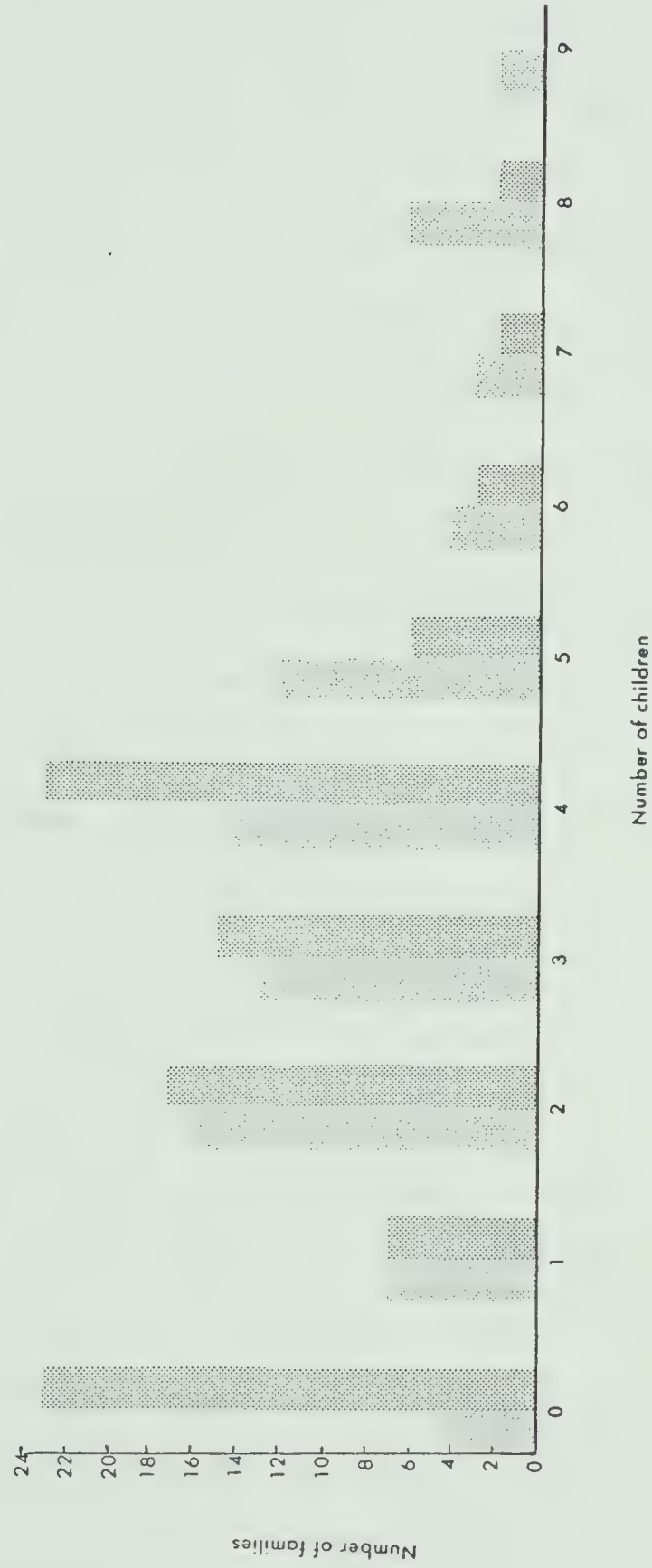
Although comparable data are not available, many people mentioned that within the last ten years, the population structure of the Goodfare district has changed considerably. By the 1950's many of the early settlers had reached old age and either retired or died, their children were grown up and most had left home. This is the type of situation one usually expects to find in poor rural areas. However, as mentioned previously, during the 1960's much of the land which was vacant in the district was taken up again, often by younger people. Thus there is now a higher proportion of young residents than one might expect. Out of a total population of 396 living in the Goodfare district there are 201 dependent children, 54 of pre-school age and 147 at school.

Education

Educational levels and age are often related and these in turn have a bearing on mobility. Better educated people usually have a broader outlook on life with greater aspirations and are also in a more favorable position in terms of obtaining alternative employment.

Changes in the educational system have resulted in

FIGURE 9 SIZE OF FAMILY



LEGEND

••••• Total number of children per family

▨▨▨▨▨ Number of children still resident at home

Average number of children per family resident at home:

Goodfare-2.75

Rural Alberta-2.19

greatly improved levels of education for the younger generation. Educational reform was greatest in the 1940's when the small local schools were gradually phased out and improved transportation made longer journeys to school feasible. These local schools provided education only to Grade eight level and many people did not have the opportunity to further their education beyond this point. There were four small schools in the study area, the last of which closed in the early 1950's. Since then all children have attended schools at Beaverlodge or Hythe. Not only are children able to receive education to the Grade twelve level but they also are exposed to an environment beyond that of the farm, and the small rural community in which they live.

Educational levels of male heads of household were examined on the basis of the two age groups distinguished in this study (Table 4). Of those over forty years of age, 60 per cent had Grade eight or nine education and only 15 per cent had higher education than this. In the under forty age group 85 per cent had Grade eight or nine education and although none had less than this not one had taken Grade twelve. Considering the fact that seven of these were under thirty this is rather surprising. An explanation for this may be that with the exception of one, all these had been born in Goodfare and after leaving school and working at home they had eventually taken over the farms from their fathers. With the prospect of acquiring a farm it is probable that they were not motivated to complete their high

TABLE 4

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF FARM OPERATOR ACCORDING TO AGE

Age	Grade									Total
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Under 40	-	-	-	-	9	14	2	2	0	27
Over 40	1	2	4	7	23	13	1	3	5	59
All Operators	1	2	4	7	32	27	3	5	5	86 ¹

school education.

Figure 10 shows the differences in educational standards between husbands and wives (regardless of age) in the Goodfare district. It is obvious that the wives are better educated than their husbands whereas only 15 per cent of the husbands had Grade ten education or higher, 52 per cent of the wives had reached this level.

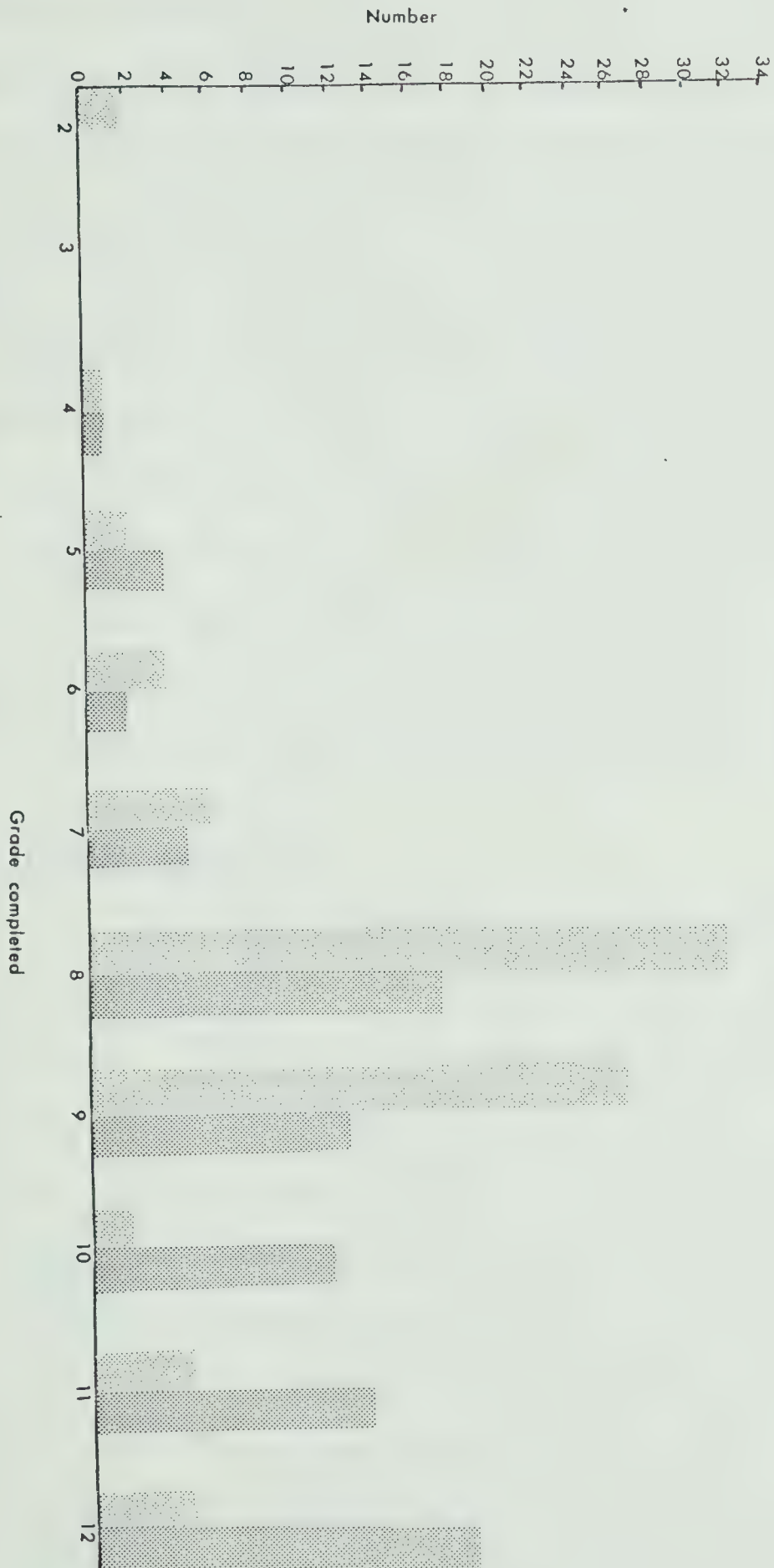
The educational standard of children of the Goodfare district is far superior to that of their parents. Of the fifteen working children who were still living at home eleven had Grade ten or more. One hundred and thirteen children had left home and 71 per cent of these had reached Grade ten or more. Forty per cent had completed Grade twelve.²

¹In this table and some subsequent tables the total of farm operators is 86. This includes 83 male farm operators, and 3 ex-farm operators who still live on their farms but rent out the land. One operator who is a widow is excluded.

²The range in ages of children who have left home varies from sixteen to forty-five. All of those completing less than Grade ten were over twenty-five years old and had thus not been subject to the more recent legislation concerning school leaving age.

FIGURE 10

COMPARATIVE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF GOODFARE FARM OPERATORS AND THEIR WIVES



Although the number of children who have finished school and are still living at home is small, there appears to be little difference in educational levels between them and those who have migrated (Table 8, p. 77). This is contrary to most research findings, for example, Olson found that in part of Indiana a greater proportion of the non-migrant population had less than Grade twelve education compared with the migrant population (Olson, 1960, p. 15). An explanation for this may be that the majority of those still living at home do not in fact work full-time on the farm. The main reason that they have been able to stay at home is that they are sufficiently educated and trained to be able to compete for the relatively few local jobs available.

Further Training

A person's ability to obtain alternative employment is an important influence on his decision whether or not to migrate. Those who have been trained in a field other than farming are in a much better position in the job market. An older farmer, with no skill other than farming, and yet not making a success of farming, is often discouraged in his attempts to migrate because of the difficulty he has in finding a job. It should also be easier psychologically for a person to leave the farm if he has some attachments outside agriculture. Twenty-five of the farm operators had some kind of other training after leaving school (Table 5). Of these seven had spent some time at Agricultural College (only

TABLE 5

TRAINING RECEIVED BY FARM OPERATORS

Type of Training	Number of Farmers
Teacher	1
Agricultural	7
Technical (Welding, engineering, etc.)	8
Apprenticeship	8
Other	1
None	<u>61</u>
Total	86

8 per cent of total), eight had some technical training in welding, engineering or mechanics, eight had served apprenticeships, (usually as craftsmen such as carpenters, or blacksmiths) and one had trained as a teacher. In most cases those with technical training had taken short courses lasting only a few weeks. Apprentices had on-the-job training lasting up to five years. A number of those with training were first generation immigrants who had trained before migrating to Canada. In such cases as mechanics and carpenters, their qualifications were often not recognized as being equivalent to Canadian requirements.

For farmers with agricultural training there would be a possibility of working locally at the Beaverlodge Agricultural Experimental Station. However, most of the farm operators who had been trained were competent farmers with

above average management ability and were less likely to want to give up farming.

Thirty-eight per cent of the farm operators stated that they had worked full-time at occupations other than farming, usually before they married and settled down. The majority had been engaged in unskilled manual jobs such as construction, truck driving, lumbering or oil rig work.

Twenty-five per cent of the farmers' wives had taken further education. Usually this was at a more advanced level than that of their husbands. Seven out of twenty-two had trained as teachers, and one had a university education. Nine had taken business courses, usually lasting a year, while two were qualified nurses and three had training as nursing aides. Eighty-six per cent of all the wives had worked prior to marriage, although 40 per cent of these had been engaged in private household or farm work. The most frequent occupations for women were as service workers such as waitresses, 15 per cent had done clerical work and 15 per cent had been teachers or nurses.

Despite the fact that the wives were usually better educated and had more experience in other occupations, their influence on migration potential is limited as most have children and so would find it difficult to engage in full-time employment if they did migrate to an urban area.

Ethnic and Cultural Characteristics

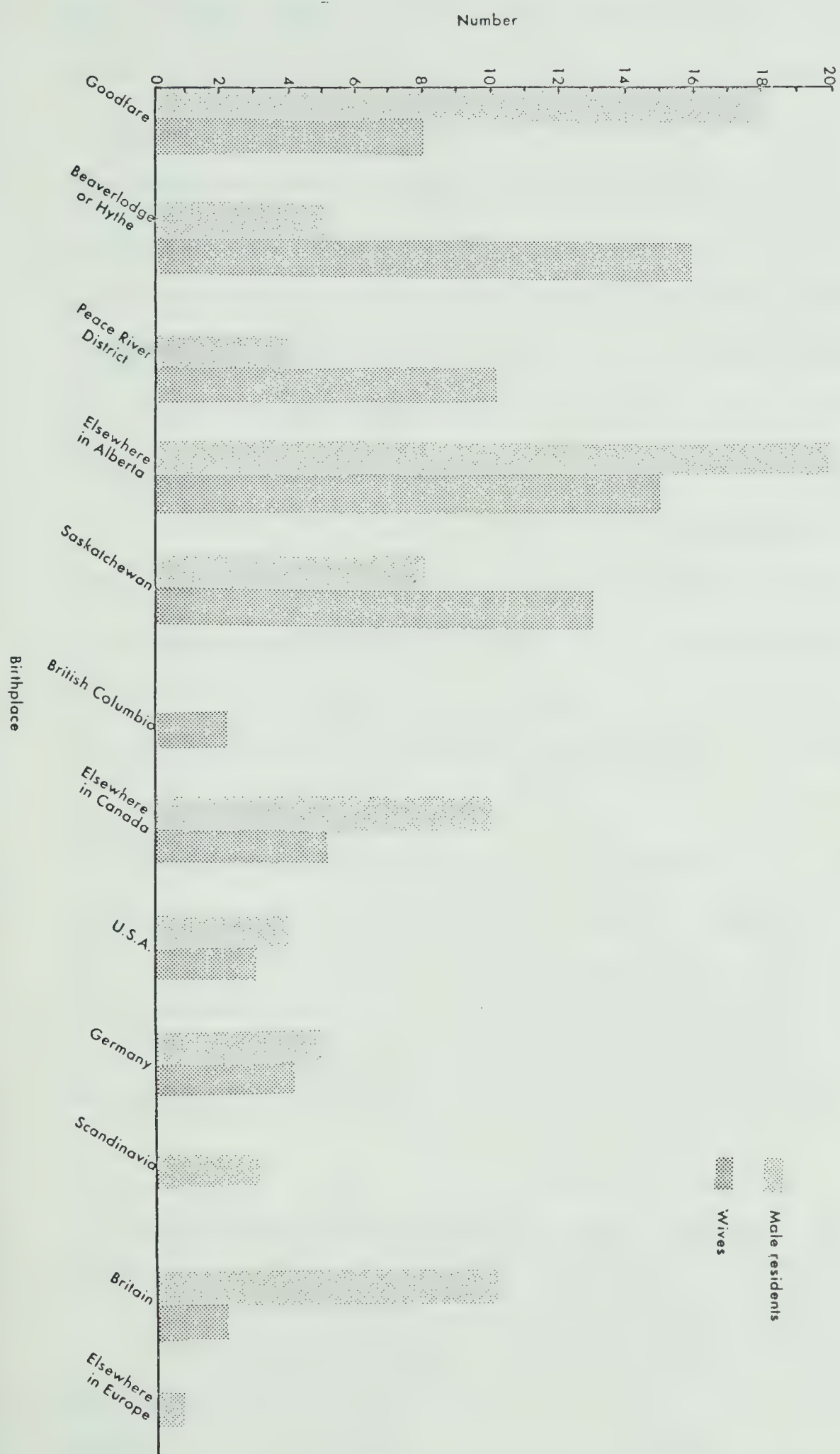
Numerically, no one ethnic group dominates the

population of the Goodfare district, although persons of British, German and Scandinavian origin make up 70 per cent of the inhabitants. However, as noted previously, the German influence has historically been dominant and is still most obvious today. Scandinavian influence is not noticeable as there are no first generation immigrants and as there are no language barriers those of British origin quickly lose their national identity.

Although statistically there appears to be little significant relationship between birthplace and the type or success of farming operations it was noticeable whilst interviewing in certain instances that the environment in which the operator was raised did have some effect. More farm operators (51 per cent) were born in Alberta than elsewhere. This includes 29 per cent who had been born in the Peace River District, of which 20 per cent were from Goodfare, and 22 per cent from outside the Peace River District mainly from the Edmonton and Red Deer districts (Figure 11). These, plus those born in Saskatchewan account for 60 per cent of farm operators. Most of these had had limited experience with livestock. Twenty-five per cent of the operators had been born in Europe and therefore would have had experience in mixed farming. Perhaps the greatest differences were in intensity of land utilization. For example, one farmer raised in Eastern Canada was operating a successful mixed farm based predominantly on cattle and pigs. Although it was

FIGURE 11

BIRTHPLACE OF ADULT MALE RESIDENTS AND THEIR WIVES



not a large farm, it was run intensively and he needed the full-time help of one of his sons. He pointed out that unlike many farmers raised in the area he was not wasteful. For example, as a result of past experience he made use of his straw instead of letting it lie in the fields, thus maximizing the use of his land. Most European farmers favoured a mixed economy although those from poorer areas still clung to a subsistence type of agriculture with perhaps too much diversity to be profitable.

When the birthplaces of husbands and wives were compared it was noticeable that many more husbands than wives were born in Goodfare (Figure 11) whereas more wives were born in Beaverlodge and Hythe. This is probably due to the early migration of females from Goodfare immediately after leaving school. Most would leave home in search of jobs and thus find husbands elsewhere. Goodfare men would therefore look for wives in the nearby towns. Ninety per cent of Goodfare's male residents were brought up on farms, fewer wives (77 per cent) had farm backgrounds, although a further 14 per cent were brought up in a rural environment (Table 6).

TABLE 6

TYPE OF UPBRINGING OF ADULT MALE RESIDENTS AND THEIR WIVES

	Type of Upbringing		
	Rural farm	Rural non-farm	Urban
Husband	90.2%	-	9.8%
Wife	77.0%	13.8%	9.2%

Twenty-five per cent of the marriages were between men and women of the same ethnic origin; nearly all of these were in the over forty age group. With fewer first generation immigrants in the area ethnic origin is now of little importance to marriages. Only twenty years ago in Goodfare the German language was spoken in public by most residents. One woman who arrived in Goodfare during the late 1940's claimed that she felt alienated within the community because she spoke no German and even had difficulty making herself understood at the local store. The population is now, however, well integrated and ethnic barriers no longer exist. In the earlier days of settlement there was much inter-marriage between Goodfare families and the kinship system in the area is complex.

Social Participation

The lively community spirit in Goodfare is a very noticeable phenomenon. In a small rural settlement at the present time when out-migration particularly of younger people is increasing one usually sees signs of a decaying community such as abandoned stores and village halls. However, in Goodfare, despite the fact that agriculturally it is poor and the majority of young people leave as soon as they finish school, there is considerable community activity. This is even more surprising in view of the fact that Goodfare is within ten miles of Beaverlodge and Hythe where there are numerous social activities including sporting facilities, bars

and various clubs.

One of the more impressive indications of community spirit is the church (Plate 10). This is used jointly by the Anglicans and Roman Catholics. It was renovated by Goodfare residents as a centennial project during 1967, when it was removed from its former location several miles south of Goodfare and relocated in the village. The painting was done by Goodfare 4-H clubs.

The village hall at Goodfare is in regular use for meetings, dances and other social gatherings and it is operated by an active Hall Board (Plate 11). Some of the more active clubs are the various church organisations, Junior Forest Wardens, and the 4-H clubs. The latter is supported largely by children of school age and it was mentioned that at present interest seemed to be declining as some of the former leaders have left school and moved elsewhere. Certain local farmers however, provide leadership assistance and the club meets frequently and organises numerous activities.

The store in Goodfare village flourishes and carries a wide range of goods and in addition has a gas pump. Most residents have to go to Beaverlodge or Hythe for their mail and major grocery shopping is usually done in the larger stores there. A considerable amount of trade comes from outside Goodfare community, from the Indian settlement at Kelly Lake, a small community twelve miles west of Goodfare in British Columbia. Goodfare store is one of the few remaining



Plate 10. The Anglican and Roman Catholic Church at Goodfare.



Plate 11. The Village Hall, Goodfare.

private fur trading posts in the Peace River. The Indians bring their furs to the store during the trapping season and often run up credit on this throughout the year. Thus as far as Indian trade goes, the store is more or less assured of their custom. The store changed hands a few years ago and the rumoured asking price was \$40,000 which is some indication of the value of its business. The most recent evidence that the community spirit is still strong in Goodfare is the construction by local residents of a skating rink. Despite the fact that both Beaverlodge and Hythe have rinks, Goodfare residents wanted their own, and through various money raising activities and voluntary labour, they were able to construct one, which was completed in the fall of 1969.

The key to the success of community activities in Goodfare appeared to be the competent leadership provided by several residents. The failure of community functions is frequently attributed to lack of such leadership, and the break-down of activities is often blamed on the fact that potential leaders migrate. Goodfare is fortunate because several farmers have leadership ability. It is these handful that organise the majority of the activities and these same people are on the whole the more prosperous farmers in the neighborhood. This is not surprising as, presumably, the same organisational qualities they display in community leadership contribute to the success of their farms. Generally speaking, most of these men were between forty and fifty years of age.

Social activities of Goodfare residents are not limited to just the local area and there is active participation in various organisations in Beaverlodge and Hythe such as the Legion, the Farmers Union and sports clubs. There was greater participation in organisations by the husband than the wife. Considering the families as a whole, 62 per cent had one or more members belonging to some type of community organisation, such as the Hall Board, Skating Rink committee, Junior Forest Wardens or fraternal organisations. Fifty per cent were affiliated to a church, 60 per cent belonged to agricultural organisations and 35 per cent to sports organisations (Table 7). These figures are a little misleading as in many instances attendance at meetings was infrequent. There seemed to

TABLE 7

MEMBERSHIP BY GOODFARE FAMILIES IN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

	Type of Organisation				Total Number of Families
	Community	Church	Agricultural	Sports	
Percentage of fami- lies parti- cipating	62.4%	49.5%	60.2%	37.6%	94

be greater enthusiasm for such informal activities as building the skating rink or attending the annual Goodfare picnic compared with attending regular meetings.

This community spirit is also evident in everyday activities. Seventy-two per cent of the residents said they

liked living in the Goodfare district and only 5 per cent did not, the remainder were indifferent. When asked, "Why do you like living in the Goodfare area?", 52 per cent replied that it was a good neighbourhood with friendly neighbours. It was often mentioned that if help was needed on the farm or in the home because of machinery breakdown or illness residents could rely on their neighbours' assistance. This is also a reason, mentioned by several farmers, for being willing to leave their wives to go out to work during the winter because help was always available if needed. The presence of family and friends and the fact that Goodfare was their home were the major reasons given for liking the Goodfare district.

It was mentioned by several residents that this community feeling was strengthened because nearly all the farmers were in a similar situation, that is, one of financial insecurity and were therefore dependent on each others help from time to time. One would expect that the social attachments to the community would act as an impediment to migration, although statistically there is no significant relationship.

Living Standards

No specific information was obtained on an individual basis concerning living standards, although certain generalisations can be made. On the whole, standards of housing were poor. Most houses were constructed of wood although all were served by electricity which was brought into the area in the mid 1950's. Many houses lacked plumbing facilities although a large number possessed a freezer. A freezer, although

a luxury item to urban dwellers is almost a necessity to people in remote rural areas some distance from stores. The household economy is also helped considerably if garden produce and game are frozen. Most houses had telephones. This service was brought into the area several years ago, and is a facility that few people would now be without. Televisions were fairly common but there were few other luxury items.

Some houses were built by the farmers themselves or with the help of neighbours with carpentry skill. Plate 12 shows a house built by the owner, who in this instance was also a carpenter; as the family grew additional rooms were added. The addition of extra rooms is a common practice, although some families with several children had problems of overcrowding. Relocation of houses is also quite common. Houses sometimes become available if a farm is bought to incorporate into another operating farm, and if the house is in fairly good condition it may be sold separately, usually at a reasonable price.

Because of lack of finance available for housing, people make use of available resources. Plate 13 shows two converted school houses in Goodfare village. One is lived in and the other is used as an apiary. Plates 14-15 show two other houses in the village; both are small consisting of two or three rooms and are occupied by retired people. With the exception of the family running the store and one other family, all the inhabitants of Goodfare village are retired. Most have moved here from the surrounding district,



plate 12. Farm house in Goodfare, built by farmer, additional rooms have been added to accommodate growing family. (Note television aerial.)



Plate 13. Two converted school houses in Goodfare village. The one on the right is used as a house and the one on the left as an apiary.



Plates 14 and 15. Two small houses in Goodfare village occupied by retired farmers.



rather than moving to Beaverlodge and Hythe because housing and local taxes are much cheaper.

Improvements to farm houses are usually last on the list of priorities. During 1968, 56 per cent of the farmers bought machinery but only 26 per cent made any improvements or bought any major appliances for their houses.

It was noticeable that Goodfare residents who had been born and brought up in Europe tended to pay more attention to the appearance of their homes. Several fairly recent German settlers who were no better off financially than their neighbours had far superior houses.

Are poor living conditions a factor in a person's decision to migrate? Certainly the farmers are aware that other people live in better conditions. However, most have been brought up in similar conditions all their lives and probably many of them would prefer to remain poor and live in the country, rather than take a chance on acquiring financial security by moving to a town.

CHAPTER V

MIGRATIONAL TRENDS

This study is concerned basically with the potential mobility of the farm operator and his dependent family. However, as Nalson comments:

"... limitations in the methodologies of some studies have resulted in great emphasis being placed on the immobile members of the community and their way of life, with insufficient weight being given to the mobile siblings of immobile farmers. . . . A study of a community at one point in time becomes a study of a residual population unless adequate genealogical data is (sic) collected for all . . . the members of that community". (p. 19, 1968)

To meet this criticism details concerning the characteristics of the migrant children of Goodfare residents were collected and are discussed here. The only former farm operators interviewed were those who had retired and were living in Goodfare village. In order, however, to obtain a more complete picture of out-migration from the area respondents were asked the location and, where applicable, the present occupation of the former owner of their land.

To conclude the section on migration, data were collected from respondents concerning attitudes toward migration.

Age, Sex and Marital Status of Migrant Children

One hundred and thirteen children of Goodfare residents who had left school had migrated from home, representing 88 per cent of the total number of children. Fifty-two per

cent of these migrants were female (Figure 12), (there were no working daughters remaining at home). The migrants ranged in age from sixteen to forty-five, and with the exception of sixteen who had worked at home or locally for a time, all had left home immediately after finishing school. For 73 per cent of the migrants, Goodfare was their birthplace.

Sixty-eight per cent of the migrants were married. Those who are still single are in most cases not yet settled in a permanent residence or occupation. They include 9 per cent who have left home to obtain further education (only two out of ten still studying were married) and a further 13 per cent who are young men working at jobs of a transient nature such as construction, lumbering and oil rig work.

Educational Standards

Compared with the educational standards of Goodfare residents, discussed in the preceding chapter, the standards reached by their children appear high. This is a reflection, on the whole, of improved educational facilities. Seventy-one per cent of the migrants had Grade ten education or more and 40 per cent had completed Grade twelve.

It is often suggested that there are significant differences in educational levels between migrant and non-migrant populations (e.g. Olson, 1960, p. 15). However, in Goodfare this does not appear to be so, and those remaining at home had reached a comparable educational level to those who had migrated (Table 8). As mentioned previously, those living at home,

AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE OF MIGRANT CHILDREN

FIGURE 12

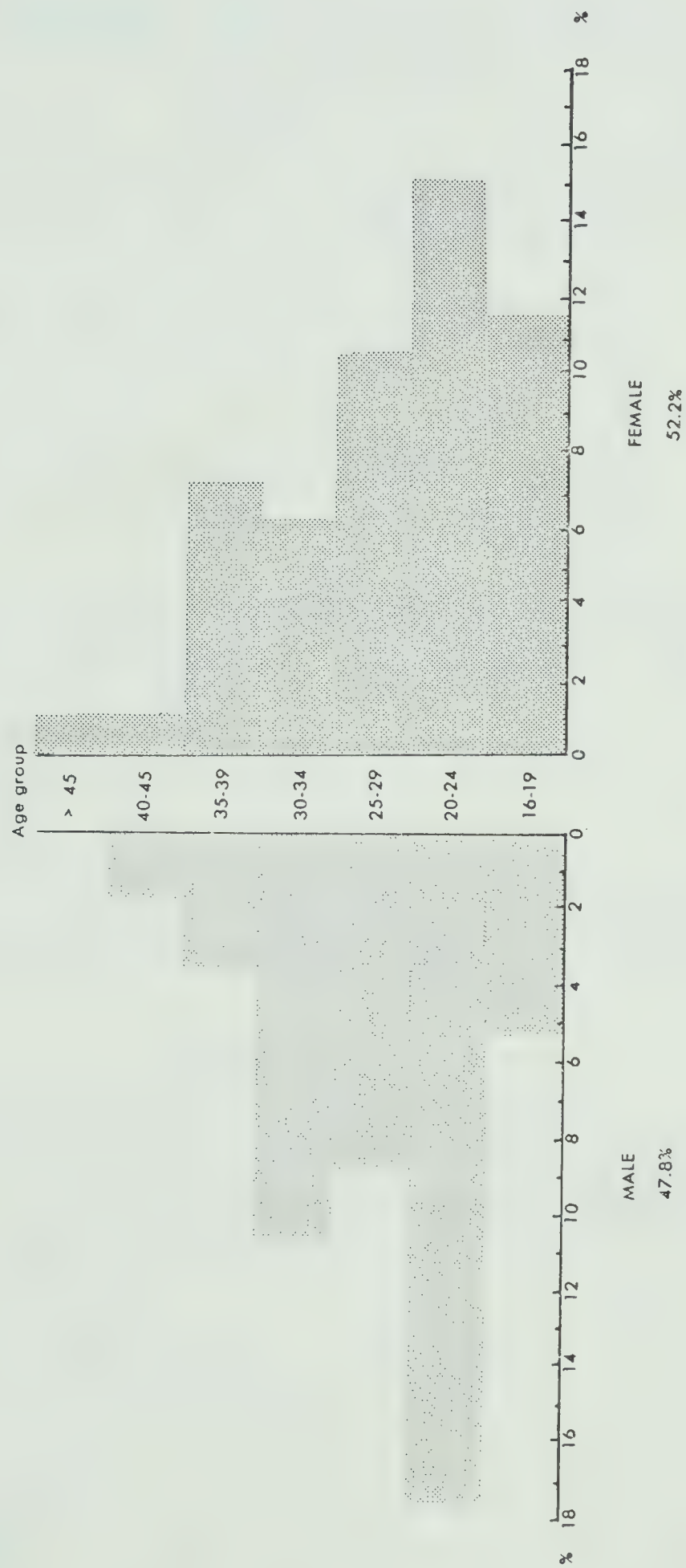


TABLE 8
EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF MIGRANT AND NON-MIGRANT
CHILDREN, CURRENTLY WORKING

	Grade							Total Number
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Percentage of Migrants	0.9	1.8	8.0	18.6	13.3	17.7	39.8	100% 113
Percentage of non- migrants	-	7.0	7.0	12.3	26.0	7.0	40.0	100% 15

but not working on the farm were engaged in skilled occupations, and three of the eight who were working at home had attended agricultural college.

Further Training

Out of 113 migrants forty-one had taken further training, of whom twenty-four were female (Table 9). Business and

TABLE 9
FURTHER TRAINING OF MIGRANT CHILDREN

Training	Number
University, Teacher training, Junior College	10
Agricultural College	4
Nursing or Nursing aide	4
Clerical	11
Technical--welding	8
Apprenticeship	2
Hairdressing	2
None	<u>72</u>
Total	113

clerical training was the most popular for girls. Of the eleven who had taken such training, all except three had taken the one year course offered at Grande Prairie Junior College. Two girls had trained as teachers, two had a university education, and three had taken some courses at the Junior College. Other training included nursing, nursing aide, and hairdressing.

Amongst the male migrants eight had been trained in technical subjects such as engineering, welding, and mechanics, four had attended agricultural college, two had university degrees, two were working as apprentices and one was training to be an accountant.

Of those who had not left home immediately after finishing school, 70 per cent were girls, who had worked locally for a short time as clerks, waitresses or shop assistants. Of the men, only two had worked on the farm prior to migrating, the other three who had continued to live at home for a time were all engaged in truck driving.

Initial Migratory Destinations

Initial migratory movements were in 47 per cent of the cases no further than Grande Prairie, which included 21 per cent of all migrants who moved only as far as Beaverlodge and Hythe. Eleven per cent moved elsewhere in the Peace River District, 16 per cent moved to Edmonton and 5 per cent went to live elsewhere in Alberta. Approximately 80 per cent of those moving to Edmonton and Grande Prairie did so

to receive further education or training. British Columbia attracted a fairly high proportion of the migrants and 15.4 per cent made their initial move there. These initial movements are shown in relation to the migrants' present residence in Figure 13.

Present Residence

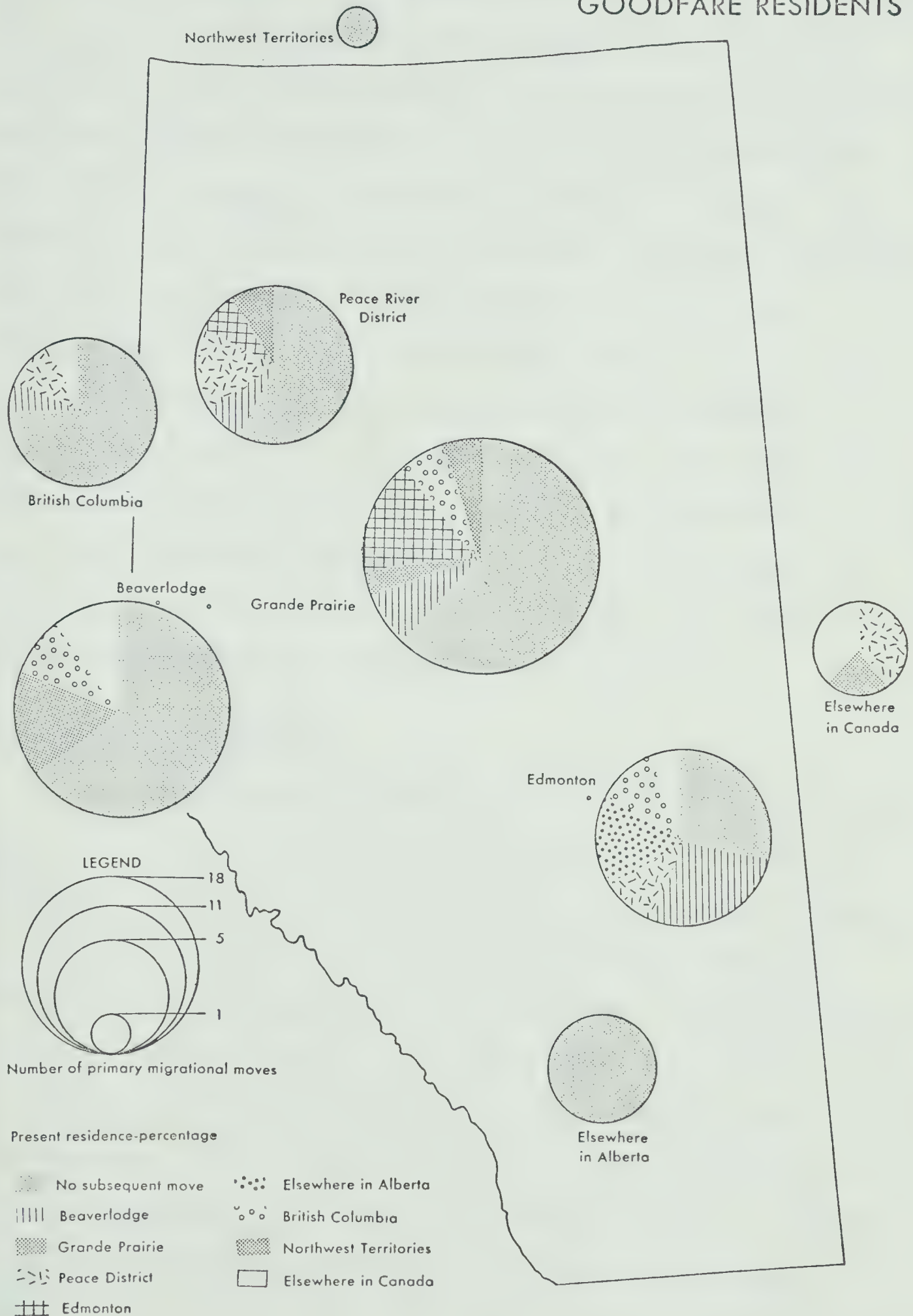
Migrants often do not settle in the place to which they initially move. Of the migrants from Goodfare, 39 per cent made one or more subsequent moves. When these movements were cross-tabulated it was noticeable that certain places were more favourable to the stability of migrants than others.

Twenty-three migrants had moved from Goodfare to Beaverlodge and fifteen of these are still resident there. From Grande Prairie, five out of the twenty-nine who initially migrated there moved to Edmonton, eighteen remained in Grande Prairie, two returned nearer home to Beaverlodge and Hythe, and the other four moved to various other places.

Of the twelve migrants who initially migrated to various places in the Peace River District, two had moved into Grande Prairie, and only two moved out of the Peace, one to go to Edmonton and one to the Northwest Territories.

If one considers initial movements from Goodfare to all places in the Peace River District then of the sixty-four migrants 70 per cent still remain within the area. This represents 34 per cent of the total migrant children from Goodfare.

FIGURE 13 MIGRATIONAL MOVEMENTS OF CHILDREN OF GOODFARE RESIDENTS



It appears that those whose initial move is straight from Goodfare to Edmonton are much more mobile. Of the eighteen who went to live there only five remain, seven have returned either to Beaverlodge or Grande Prairie and five have moved elsewhere in Alberta or British Columbia. As mentioned previously a large proportion of migrants to Edmonton are those pursuing further education or training. It is interesting that so few remain in the city to obtain jobs and that a relatively large proportion have returned to the Peace River District. Six other migrants, three who moved initially to British Columbia and three to elsewhere in Canada, have also returned to Grande Prairie or Beaverlodge. The majority of migrants however, to other areas of Alberta and British Columbia have remained fairly settled.

Occupation of Migrants

The most popular occupations were clerical work for women (17.2 per cent) and operative jobs for men (also 17.2 per cent) (Table 10). Twelve (12.9 per cent) were engaged as service workers. These were mainly women working as waitresses, hairdressers and nursing aides. Nine hold professional posts, mostly as teachers, eight are farming, ten are obtaining further education and nine work as labourers. The remainder are engaged in a variety of jobs such as sales work or carpentry. This general classification of occupations was further categorized according to the type of work

TABLE 10
PRESENT OCCUPATION OF ALL MIGRANTS¹

Occupation	Number of Migrants
Professional, technical	9
Farmer	8
Managers - office	1
Clerical	16
Sales	4
Craftsmen	4
Operative	16
Private household	4
Service	12
Labourer	9
Student	10
Total	932

in an attempt to see if there was any resemblance between the type of work commonly undertaken by farmers as off-farm employment and migrants on a full-time basis. With the exclusion of female migrants it was found that 48 per cent of the migrant males were engaged in occupations that were common types of off-farm employment in the Goodfare district. These included work with lumber and oil companies, trucking, caterpillar tractor (CAT) operating, construction and road grading.

These jobs on the whole require only minimal training and are mainly out of doors. They are therefore ideally

¹Classified according to the U.S. Census, Index of Occupations and Industries. (Bureau of Census, Washington, 1960.)

²Excludes housewives.

suited to farmers' sons especially those with low educational levels. Work with lumber, oil and construction companies is usually a seasonal or part-time basis, but as many of the young men are single this presents no real problems. Frequently on leaving school they prefer to obtain a labouring job which although seasonal does not involve moving too far from home. Later, when they are more aware of job opportunities, and perhaps wish to marry and settle down, they are prepared to look further afield for a more stable occupation. The influence of this young labour force competing for the same jobs as farmers will be discussed in the following section.

On reaching school leaving age most of those academically capable of continuing their education did so. Twenty-eight per cent had gone on to junior college, agricultural college or university. The majority however, must seek employment away from home once they leave school, and for 59 per cent this was the reason given for leaving.

For girls there is an alternative to leaving home in search of a job, that is marriage. Fourteen did not leave home till they married, and of these ten were married immediately after finishing school.

Differential Patterns of Migration between Males and Females

The migrational data were cross-tabulated and further analysed in an attempt to reveal any significant differences of migrational behaviour between the sexes.

Differences in educational levels were noted between males and females (Table 11). Approximately 70 per cent of

TABLE 11

COMPARATIVE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF MALE AND FEMALE MIGRANTS

	Grade							Total
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Male								
Percentage	1.9	1.9	9.3	18.5	18.5	9.3	40.7	100% 54
Female	-	1.7	6.8	18.6	8.5	25.4	39.0	100% 59
Percentage	...							

both sexes completed Grade ten or more but a greater proportion of males than females left school after completing Grade ten. Only 9 per cent of the males left after Grade eleven whereas 26 per cent of the females left after this grade. A possible explanation for this may be that, unlike males, they are unable to obtain well paid jobs with only Grade ten education and it is often necessary for them to obtain further training. There is very little opportunity to remain at home and work locally, and even in Grande Prairie there is stiff competition for jobs. More females therefore, remained in school after Grade ten but left after Grade eleven because this is the required level if they wish to continue with further training in business or as nursing aides.

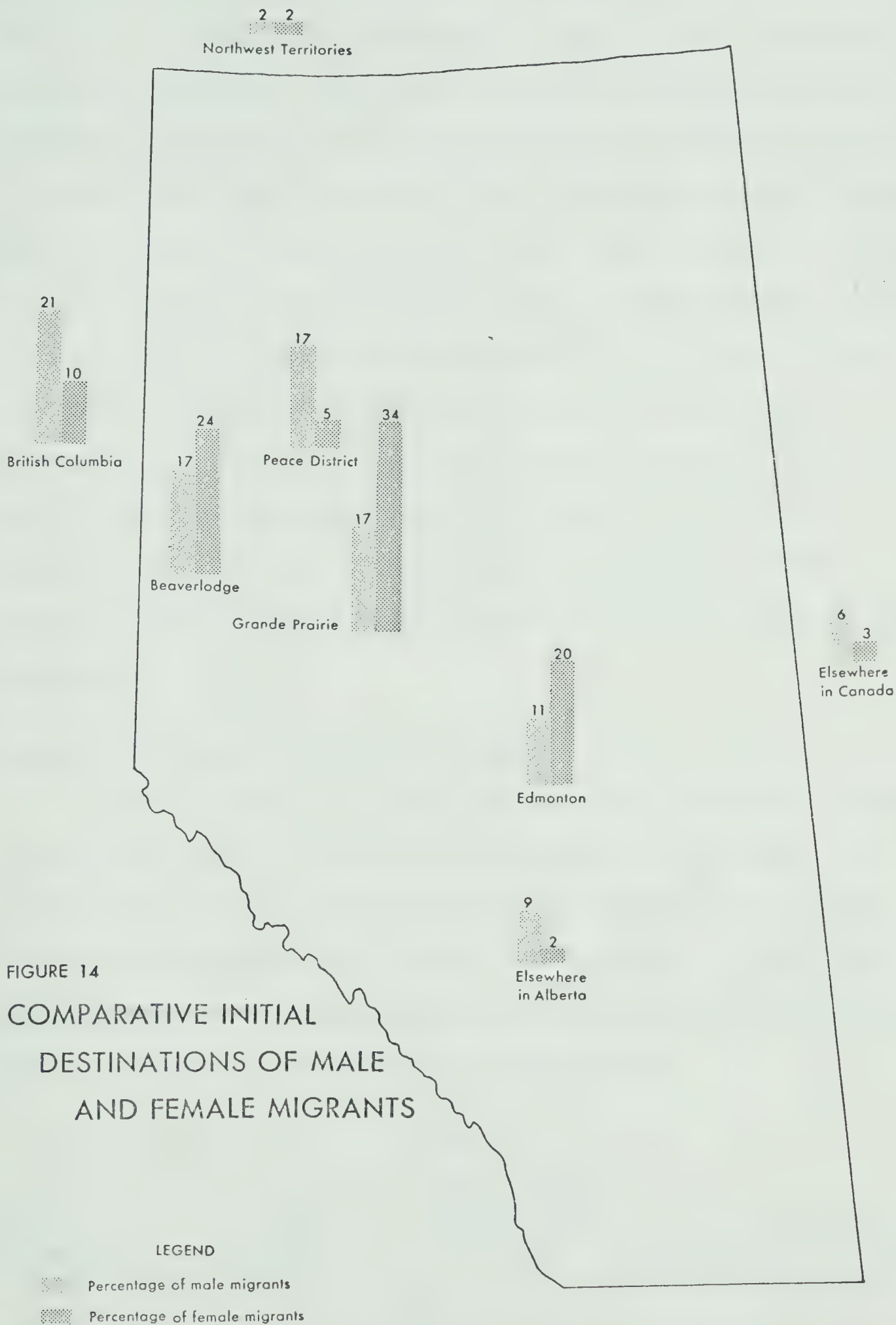
It has frequently been suggested that migrational movements of males and females differ because the motivations are different (e.g. Nalson, 1968, p. 78). Whereas the major

reason for the migration of males is to obtain employment the motivating force behind females is often to search for a marriage partner. As mentioned previously, fourteen girls married and left home immediately after finishing school. Since leaving home many more female migrants have married. Seventy-six per cent of the female migrants are married compared with 59 per cent of the males.

Chi-square tests applied to the patterns of initial migration of both sexes revealed that differential movements were significantly related to the sex of the migrant at the 5 per cent level. Further examination of the data showed that males tended to migrate initially further from home. Whereas only 36 per cent of the females migrated beyond Grande Prairie, 66 per cent of the males moved further (Figure 14).

Noticeable differences occurred between the movement of males and females to Edmonton and British Columbia. Twice as many females (20 per cent) as males moved to Edmonton, whereas the reverse was true of movements to British Columbia.

Subsequent migrational movements also showed differential patterns. The proportion of male migrants to Grande Prairie increased by 5.6 per cent whereas the female migrant population decreased by 10 per cent. The number of girls taking one year business courses at Grande Prairie and then finding jobs elsewhere may account for this. Several did return to work in Beaverlodge and there was an increase here



of 5 per cent by female migrants. Secondary migrational moves out of Edmonton were common to both sexes. British Columbia attracted 5 per cent more female migrants in later movements but showed a 2 per cent decline in male migrants. It would appear that the search for job opportunities causes many subsequent movements amongst the male migrants, resulting in a decline in the male migrants to Beaverlodge, Edmonton and British Columbia where competition for jobs is greatest, and an increased migration to Grande Prairie, the Northwest Territories and other parts of Alberta. Sixty per cent of the females remained in the Peace River District. A possible explanation is that many have married farmers within the Peace and therefore are fairly stabilised in their residence.

Migrational Trends of Past Occupants

Within the past twenty years there has been a change in operators on 62 per cent of the farms in Goodfare. In 22 per cent of the cases the previous occupier died whilst still operating the farm, 42 per cent retired, 32 per cent migrated and 4 per cent rented out their land although they still remained in the farm house (Table 12).

TABLE 12

PREVIOUS FARM OPERATOR

Deceased	Retired	Migrated	Rented land out (Still living on premises)
17	33	25	3

Twenty-six (81 per cent) of the thirty-three farmers that retired did not go further than Grande Prairie. Of these, six remained in the Goodfare district and fifteen went to Beaverlodge or Hythe. Two went to live in Edmonton and three went to British Columbia (Table 13).

TABLE 13

LOCATION OF PREVIOUS OPERATORS WHO RETIRED

Location	Number
Goodfare	6
Beaverlodge or Hythe	15
Grande Prairie	5
Edmonton	2
Elsewhere in Alberta	1
British Columbia	3
Unknown	<u>1</u>
Total	33

The migrational pattern of the past occupants was over a period of twenty years and therefore may not be truly representative of trends today. Twenty-eight per cent (7) of all migrants who did not retire went to Beaverlodge or Hythe, and 20 per cent (5) stayed in the Goodfare district (Table 14). Small numbers also went elsewhere in Alberta, British Columbia, and the United States. Nine (4.5 per cent) migrants moved elsewhere to farm (Table 15). No other occupation was outstanding in its attraction, and migrants were employed in a diversity of jobs such as garage worker,

TABLE 14

LOCATION OF PREVIOUS OPERATORS WHO MIGRATED

Location	Number
Goodfare	5
Beaverlodge or Hythe	7
Elsewhere in Alberta	4
Peace River District	3
British Columbia	2
United States	1
Elsewhere	<u>3</u>
Total	25

salesman, truck driver or storekeeper. It seems unlikely that as many future migrants from Goodfare will move to farm elsewhere as most lack the capital required.

TABLE 15

PRESENT OCCUPATION OF PREVIOUS OPERATORS WHO MIGRATED

Occupation	Number
Farmer	9
Manager, Office	2
Sales	3
Craftsman	1
Operative	1
Private Household Worker	1
Service	2
Labourer	1
Unknown	<u>5</u>
Total	25

Attitudes of Present Occupants towards Migration

When asked whether or not they had considered moving, 40 per cent (37) of present farm operators said they had thought about it. Financial problems and the statement that there was "no future in farming" were the replies given by 68 per cent of the respondents as their reasons for wishing to move. Retirement was mentioned by 19 per cent as a reason for moving and other responses included better opportunities elsewhere for the children, poor health and other personal factors.

When those who had stated that they had considered moving were asked if they had made any definite plans, only five out of thirty-seven stated that they had. In response to the question why they had not done anything definite about moving although they had considered it, thirteen replied that the problem of selling the land at an "acceptable price"¹ was preventing them moving. Nineteen per cent stated that they liked living on the land. One might interpret this as meaning that they have not seriously thought of leaving the country and moving into town although they may have considered selling out during bad periods. Eleven per cent mentioned that lack of alternative skills and the consequent problem of finding a job was preventing them from moving. It would appear that those who gave the latter response had perhaps given realistic thought to the pros and cons of leaving the

¹"Acceptable price" was discussed previously in Chapter III.

farm. Other responses to the question included, preferring to raise the children in the country and lack of money to move elsewhere.

Although thirty-seven replied that they had thought of moving it is doubtful whether many of them have actually seriously considered it. Perhaps some indication of this can be gained from their response to the question, "What occupation would you choose if you were not farming?" (Table 28, p. 122). Forty-eight per cent of those who said they had considered moving had little idea about what else they could do and gave vague replies such as "outdoor work" and "a job where I am my own boss".

It would appear that for the children of Goodfare residents there is little alternative to migration when leaving school and the decision to migrate is more or less made for them. However, for the farm operator with family commitments, age, and generally a lower education than the younger generation acting as deterrents to migration the decision to migrate is much more difficult. Although a number of farmers have contemplated making a move, only a few have gone further than this.

CHAPTER VI

OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT

The examination of the nature and extent of off-farm employment in the Goodfare district is the central focus of this study. The preceding chapters on the agricultural economy and the demographic and social characteristics of Goodfare residents have provided a framework within which to examine more closely this one aspect of the economic and social environment of the Goodfare district.

The nature of off-farm employment in the Peace River country is in many ways characteristic of the agricultural fringe areas of Alberta, although there is probably more opportunity for off-farm employment in the Peace than elsewhere. The region is isolated from areas of major industrial development, and yet there is no shortage of seasonal employment for those wishing to engage in it. This chapter presents the basic facts concerning off-farm employment as a basis for considering its relative influence on mobility.

Extent of Off-Farm Employment

In the Goodfare district, 61.6 per cent (47) of all

"active farm operators"¹ engaged in off-farm employment during the years 1968-69. This is a large proportion compared for example, with farmers in Bonnyville, another marginal farming area of Alberta, where only 38 per cent had other employment (Buckmire, 1968, p. 69).

Type of Employment

The availability of employment largely determines the nature of work in which the farmers engage. The classification of occupations has been based on the U.S. Census Index of Occupations (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1960) which uses such classifications as operative, unskilled labourer, craftsman, etc. In order to make this classification more applicable to the study area, a further breakdown into the type of industry has been used. The breakdown of the number of farmers engaged in each occupation and industry is seen in Figure 14.

The largest proportion of those working off the farm, 40.4 per cent were engaged as operatives, usually as truck drivers or CAT operators. The demand for truck drivers is high in the Peace River District due to the remoteness of most oil and lumber camps, which means that all the supplies

¹"Active farm operators" refers to the number of farmers (73) who are still actively running their farms. The total number of farm operators is eighty-four but ten of these considered themselves to be retired and one is a widow. These eleven were excluded in some instances from the consideration of off-farm employment as they are not part of the potential off-farm labour force.

(even in some cases such necessities as water) must be transported by road. The demand during the winter months is at its peak as many of these camps operate only during this season. Experienced CAT operators are also in high demand for oil drilling operations, seismic development, and land clearing. This offers an excellent opportunity for seasonal employment and is particularly suitable for farmers who have experience handling tractors and heavy equipment. Three farmers in Goodfare own CAT's which they use for land clearing within the local area as well as for custom work for logging and construction companies. One farmer in partnership with his sons owns several CAT's and within the last few years has developed a profitable business. One other operative job, which is much sought after, is that of road grader. This is a year round job but it also permits the operator to run his farm as it involves only local work.

Thirty-two per cent of those engaged in off-farm employment were classified as unskilled labourers. Mainly this involved work for oil and lumber companies. These companies favour the employment of farmers for seasonal work as they are accustomed to outdoor manual work. They are also reliable because most, due to financial circumstances, are forced to remain working in order to meet their farm expenses. Although their jobs are unskilled it is possible for them to earn substantial sums of money, up to \$1,000 per month, by working overtime. Those who work cutting pulp are paid by the amount of wood they cut.

The remainder of those working off the farm were engaged in a variety of jobs, including three who were camp cooks for oil companies and two who worked for the railway.

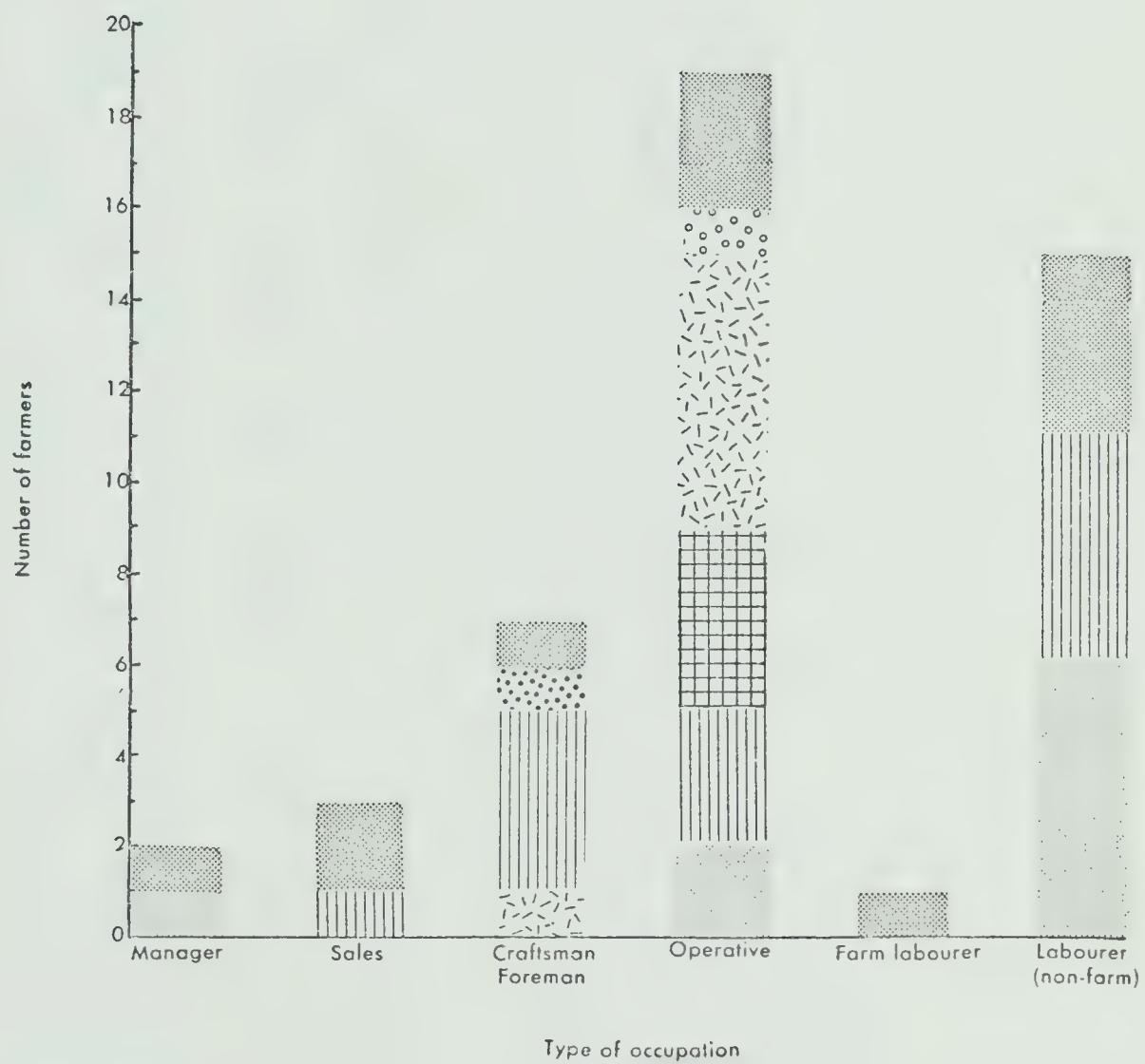
It can be seen in Figure 15 that according to a breakdown by industries, the oil companies engage 25.5 per cent and the lumber companies 19.1 per cent of the unskilled labour force. Fifteen per cent of the farmers were engaged as CAT operators while truck driving and railway work each accounted for 8.5 per cent of the labour force. Of the 23 per cent engaged in CAT operating or truck driving, 14.9 per cent worked for oil or lumber companies. Thus, 59.5 per cent of all farmers engaged in off-farm employment worked in two major fields--oil or lumbering.

Amount of Time Spent Working Off the Farm

As winter work would interfere least with farm work one would expect most farmers to work off the farm for three to six months each year. Twenty of the farmers did so and of these, seventeen worked during the winter months when work on the farm was minimal (Tables 16 and 17).

Twenty-three worked off the farm for more than six months each year and of these, eighteen did not consider their major occupation to be farming. Eight in this latter category, although owning and operating farms in Goodfare did not live on the premises but in Beaverlodge or Hythe. One may question the validity of including these eighteen respondents in the category of "farmers engaged in off-farm employment".

FIGURE 15 TYPE OF OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT:
OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY



LEGEND

Lumbering

Oil

Trucking

CAT operating

Road grading

Railway

Carpentry

Other

TABLE 16

AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT WORKING OFF THE FARM

	Under 4 wks.	4-8 weeks	8-12 weeks	12-16 weeks	16-20 weeks	20-24 weeks	Over 24 weeks	Total
Off-Farm Workers Percentage	2.1	4.3	2.1	14.9	12.8	14.9	48.9	100%
Number	1	2	1	7	6	7	23	47

TABLE 17

TIME OF YEAR DURING WHICH OPERATORS ENGAGE IN OFF-FARM WORK

	Winter	All Year	Winter & Summer	Summer
Number of off- farm workers	17	25	2	3

However, although they earned the majority of their gross income from non-farm employment, all but five invested most of their income in their farming operations. The five respondents who did not do so had successful non-farm occupations, and did not live on their farms which they operated more or less as side lines. In the remaining thirteen cases the respondents had aspirations to develop their farm resources. Five of these thirteen had at one time farmed full-time but had been forced, for economic reasons, to engage in non-farm employment, the others had always engaged in non-farm employment but hoped to build up their farms in order to one day farm full-time.

Seventy-one per cent of farmers engaged in off-farm employment worked for the same length of time each year. It would appear that many of them, particularly the older farmers have established a "way of life" in which off-farm employment is an accepted part. Several had worked off the farm each year for twenty years or more. Of the eleven who did not work off the farm each year, or who did varying amounts of work, four said that the amount of off-farm work was dependent on the level of the farm income in any particular year, three said that it depended on whether or not they were keeping stock and two replied that it was related to personal reasons such as their health or the age of their children.

Ninety-two per cent of all farmers did the same type of work each year.

Acquisition of Off-Farm Employment

Fifty-three per cent (25) of those engaged in off-farm work found out about or acquired their jobs through a friend or relative. Thirty-one per cent (14) were contacted by the employer. These were mainly those who had worked for the company before and were reliable and had certain skills. Two had acquired their jobs through the Manpower Office in Grande Prairie, two had replied to newspaper advertisements and three had obtained their jobs by other means.

Location of Off-Farm Employment

The location of off-farm employment during 1968-69 is shown in Figure 16. There were few seasonal jobs available locally within the Beaverlodge and Hythe area, and the fourteen who worked there consisted largely of those with full-time non-agricultural employment. A further eighteen found off-farm employment, mainly seasonal, within the Peace River country or Northwestern Alberta. The actual location of jobs tended to vary from year to year as it was largely dependent on where lumbering or oil drilling operations were being carried out. During the year 1968-69, a number of Goodfare residents had worked for oil companies in the far north of Alberta in the Rainbow and Zamma Lakes areas. Most of those engaged in lumbering had worked south of Grande Prairie near the Wapiti River. Seven had worked in British Columbia and an equal number had worked in the Northwest Territories. This was also largely work for oil and lumber

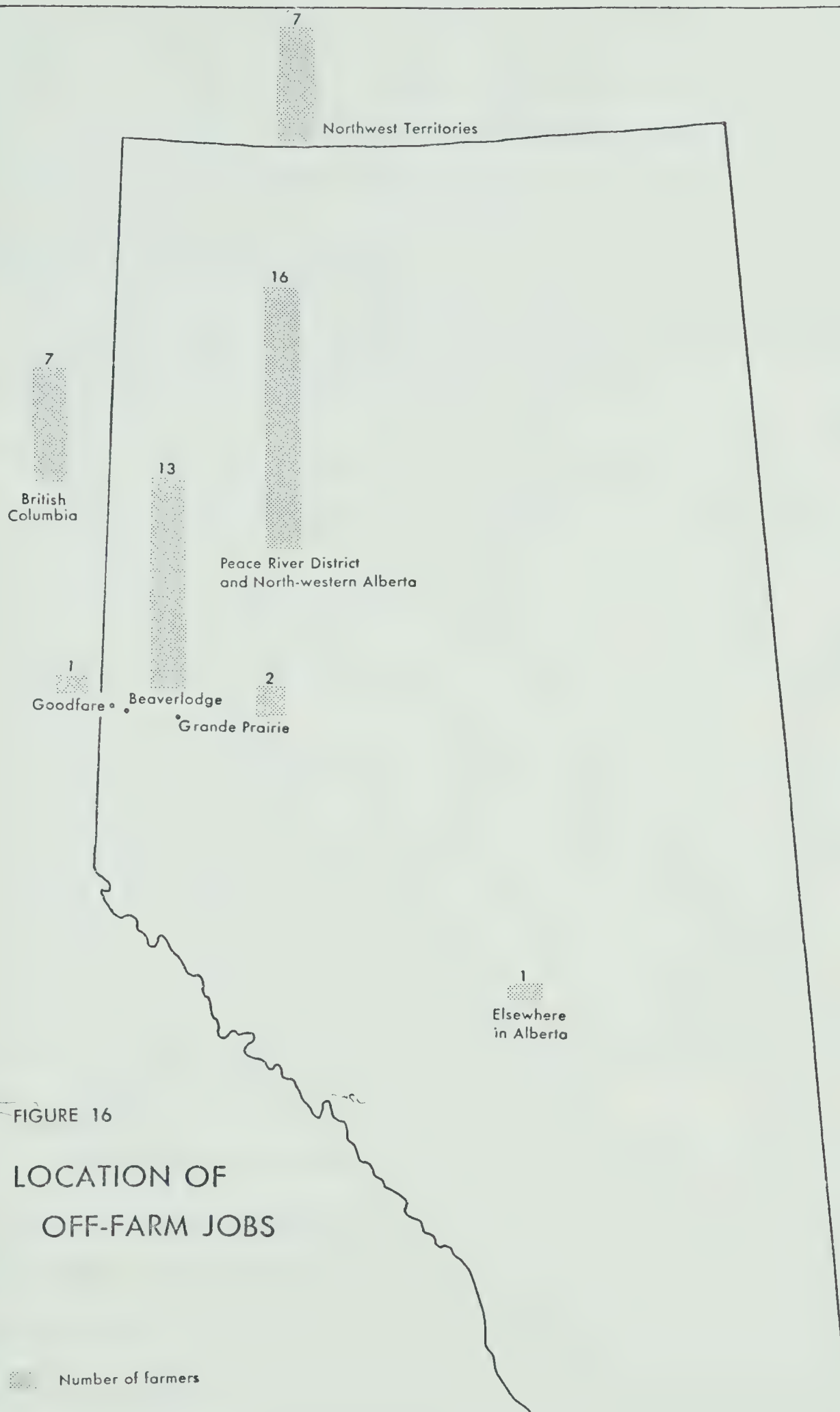


FIGURE 16

LOCATION OF OFF-FARM JOBS

Number of farmers

companies. Although it involved travelling further from home it was stated that it was possible to earn higher wages in both British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. In terms of distance, 30 per cent worked less than twenty miles from home but the greater proportion of these had full-time jobs. Thirty-eight per cent worked between 50-200 miles from home and 25 per cent were over 200 miles away. The significance of the distance away from home is related to the frequency with which it was possible to return home for a visit. Sixty-two per cent of those engaged in off-farm work lived away from home. Of these, just over half were able to get home at least every two weeks for a few days, and a total of 79 per cent got home at least every three weeks. Only 14 per cent were absent from home for three months or more. Those working for oil companies benefited from the usual patterns of work, whereby employees work for two to three weeks without a break and then get several days off. Farmers who work cutting lumber have a more flexible schedule as they are paid for the amount of work done. Most of these tried to get home every two weeks.

Although most farmers did not like being away from their farms for more than two or three weeks, 45 per cent stated that, if necessary, they would be willing to leave their families for several months in order to obtain work. Thirty-eight per cent said that, if necessary, they would travel any distance to get work, 12 per cent were prepared

to travel between 200-400 miles, 32 per cent would go between 50-200 miles and 18 per cent would not be willing to travel over fifty miles.

Employment of Farmers' Wives

Eighteen farmers wives in Goodfare were engaged in paid employment during 1968-69 (Table 18).

TABLE 18

OCCUPATION OF OPERATORS' WIVES

	Type of Occupation				Total
	Professional	Clerical	Operative	Service Worker	
Number of wives	5	3	1	9	18

Service occupations outweighed the others and 14 per cent worked as waitresses, camp cooks or hairdressers. Five held professional posts, four as teachers and one as a district nurse. Three had clerical jobs and one operated the school bus. A further eleven wives said they worked full-time on the farm.

Ten of the working wives were engaged in full-time employment throughout the year. A further four worked for three to four months each year, (all of these were camp cooks on oil rigs). The other four worked for varying lengths of time from one to six months.

Thirteen of the wives did not have to leave home to find employment and with the exception of one working in

Grande Prairie, they all worked in the Beaverlodge and Hythe district. Of the five who were living away from home whilst working, one was in Grande Prairie, one in the Peace River District, one in the Northwest Territories, and two in the Hinton district. Eighty-three per cent of the working wives had husbands engaged in off-farm employment.

Twelve of the eighteen had children still at home, the average number being 3.25, and four of these had one of pre-school age. The significance of family structure in relationship to its effect on off-farm employment is discussed in Chapter VII.

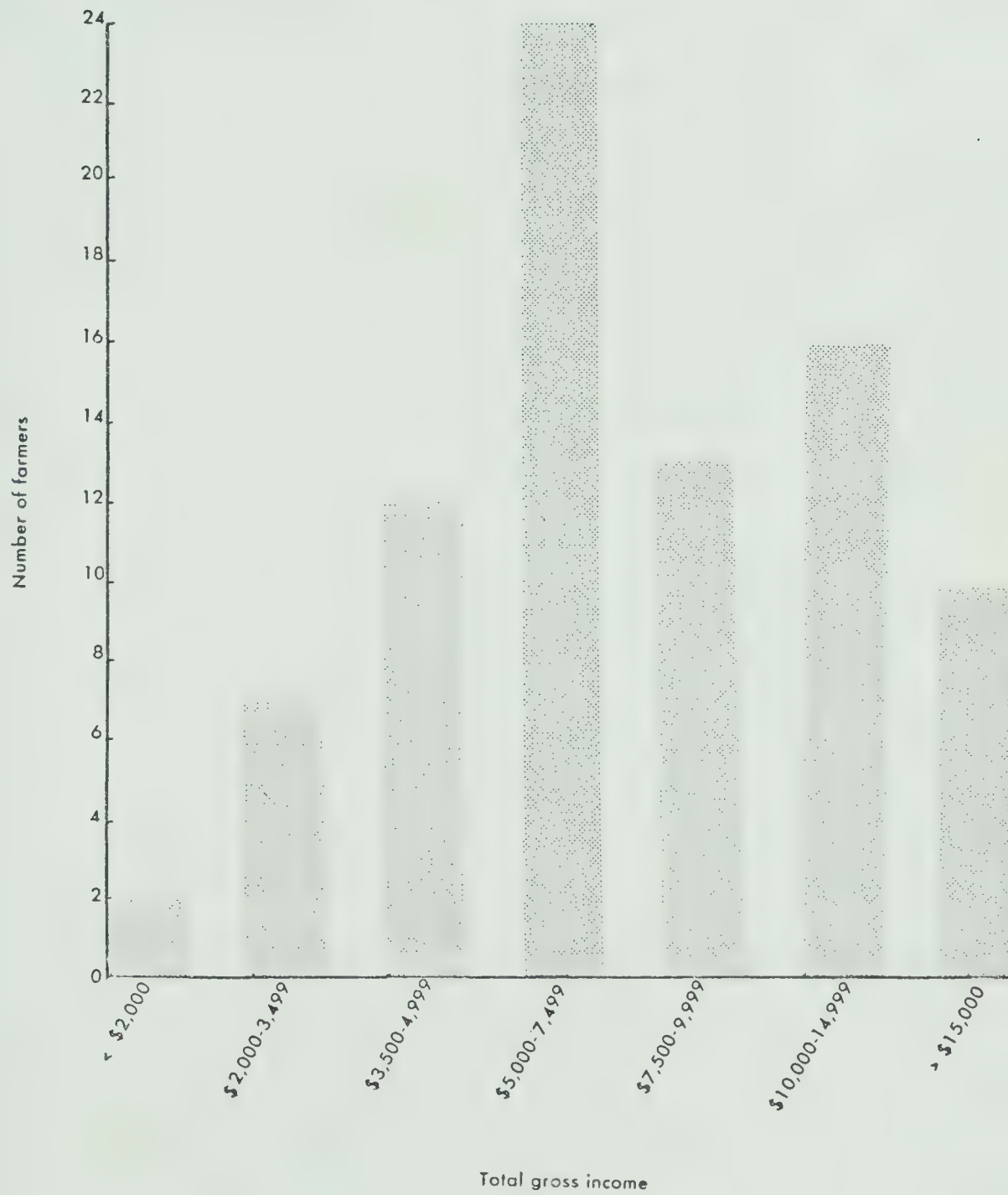
Income

Data on gross income from all sources and the proportion of this earned from off-farm employment were collected from all farmers during the course of interviewing. There appeared to be little reluctance on the part of most farmers to give income data so that it can be assumed that they are a fairly accurate, although probably general, indication of the financial state of Goodfare farmers. However, gross income figures should be used cautiously, and should be considered in relationship to such factors as the type of farming economy and the size of family that must be supported.

Reported gross income of Goodfare farmers for 1968-69 is shown in Figure 17. The greatest number of farmers in any one group, twenty-four, grossed between \$5-7,500. Thirty-nine farmers earned more than \$7,500 but as shown in Figure 19

FIGURE 17

TOTAL GROSS INCOME FROM FARM AND NON-FARM
SOURCES: GOODFARE 1968-1969



Source: Field survey

only eleven of these obtained this solely from farming operations.

Small or non-commercial farms are defined by the Canada Federal Task Force on Agriculture (Federal Task Force, 1969, p. 419) as those reporting under \$5,000 gross farm sales. Approximately 58 per cent of the farming operations in Goodfare fall within this category (Figure 18).

An estimate given by the Federal Task Force of the relationship between gross and net income suggests that gross farm sales of \$3,500-5,000 yield an average net income of \$2,489, therefore virtually all farms with sales below \$5,000 would have less than \$3,000 net income and would therefore fall below what is generally accepted as the poverty level (Federal Task Force on Agriculture, 1969, p. 420).

Poverty is difficult to define except on a relative basis. However, using the rough guidelines in the Economic Council of Canada's Fifth Annual Review (1968, p. 108) in which estimates were based on a study carried out by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in 1961, low income families were defined as "families with incomes insufficient to purchase much more than basic essentials of food, clothing and shelter". For a family with one child the poverty level was estimated to be \$3,000. There are special difficulties when defining poverty amongst farm families. Generally, rural costs of living are lower and despite the fact that a farmer's net income may be low he nevertheless has considerable assets

such as land, stock and machinery.

Opinions have varied concerning the income level one should use to define low-income farm families. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics has presented several estimates, one of the earliest in 1958 placed the poverty level at \$2,400 gross income from all sources. ARDA in 1961 defined a low-income farm family as having a farm with a capital value of less than \$24,950, with gross sale of agricultural products of less than \$2,000 and off-farm work of less than a month each year (Canadian Department of Forestry, Economic and Social Disadvantage in Canada, 1964). However, Menzies in 1965 believed that an income of \$3,750 from agricultural sales was a more realistic figure (Menzies, 1965, p. 5). The most recent estimate by the Federal Task Force, and the one used throughout the present study, uses \$5,000 gross farm sales as the level for defining a low income farm (Federal Task Force, 1969, p. 419).

In most cases in Goodfare where farm income fell below an acceptable level additional income was obtained from off-farm employment. When those engaging in off-farm work were asked if they could support their families solely from farm income 73 per cent (33) of the forty-seven replied that they could not. However, based on gross farm sales forty-nine families would be living below the recognised poverty level if they did not work off the farm. Thus, sixteen families consider that they could support their families on gross

incomes of under \$5,000. However, ten of these are over sixty years of age with no family to support and two are bachelors.

Conclusion

The oil, gas and lumber industries and their service industries such as trucking, provide an excellent source of off-farm employment for farmers in the Peace District. Farming operations fit in well with these industries as they require most labour during the winter when farm work is slackest. Much of the labour required is seasonal and involves heavy, outdoor manual work, thus farmers are well suited for these types of jobs.

Although most Goodfare farmers must leave home for a period of time to acquire jobs, they are usually able to make regular visits to the farm every two weeks or so. Income from this off-farm work represents a varying proportion of a farm operator's income depending on the amount and type of off-farm work and the amount of farm income. For many farmers this non-farm income is invested in their farming operations. The relative importance of off-farm income is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT, AGE AND MOBILITY

The preceding chapters have presented in descriptive form the results of the questionnaire survey, thus providing the basis on which to consider the impact of off-farm employment in relation to age and mobility. Cross-tabulations and chi-square tests were performed between selected pairs of variables. The results and conclusions drawn from these are presented in this chapter, with the aim of testing the hypothesis that off-farm employment has a differential effect on mobility dependent on the age of the farm operator.

There are three constituent factors in the hypothesis, off-farm employment, age and the relationship of these to mobility. First to be considered is the significance of off-farm employment. Its effects on the economy and type of agricultural operation are discussed as well as the effect of the demographic and social characteristics of the operator and his family on the incidence of off-farm employment. Next, the effects of age in relationship to these factors is considered, and finally the interrelationships between mobility and these two variables.

The Role of Off-Farm Employment

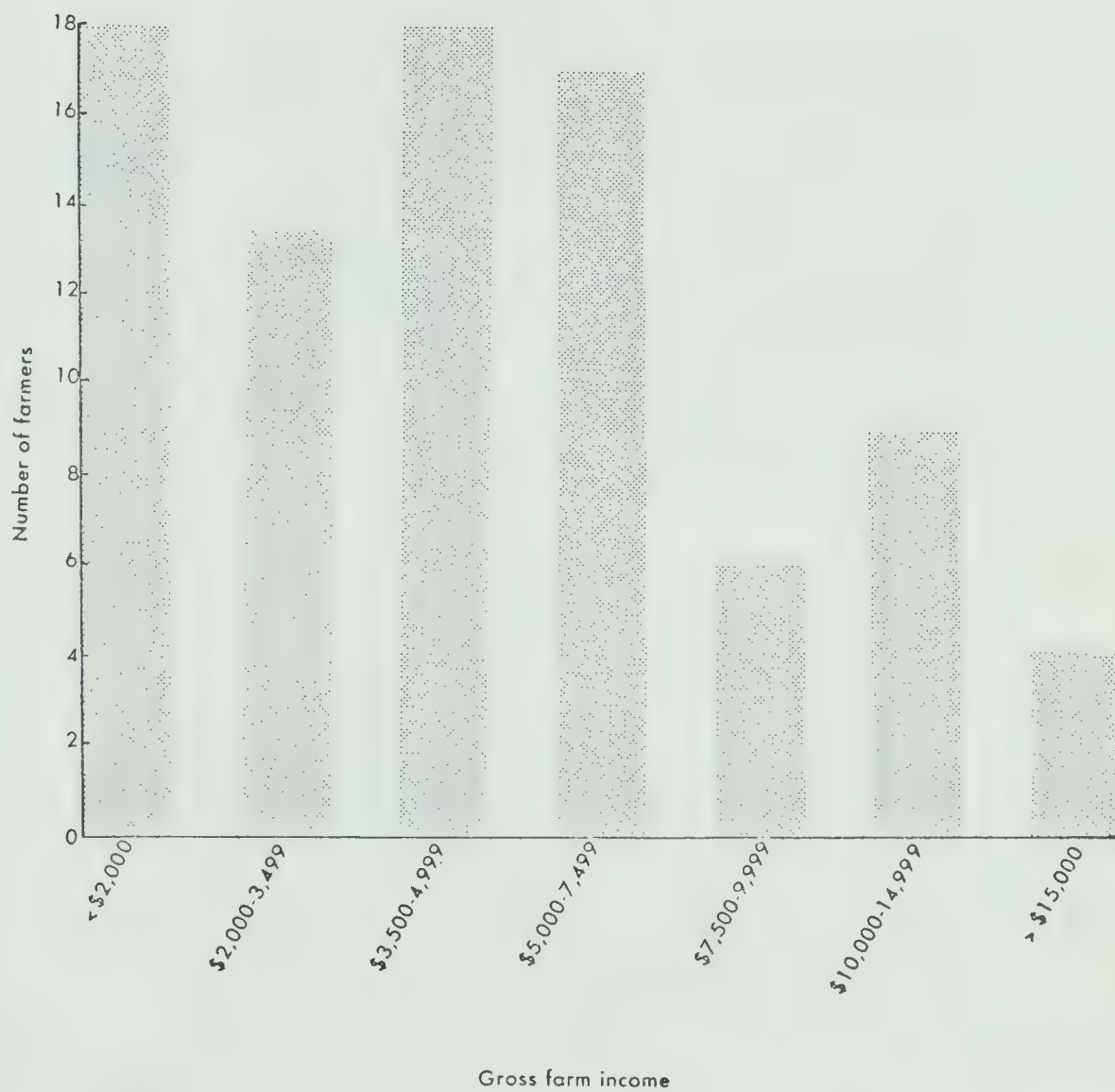
Economic Aspects

As shown in Figure 17, 58 per cent of Goodfare farmers would be living below the "poverty level" if they did not supplement their farm incomes. Seventy-one per cent of those operating small "non-commercial" farms do supplement their incomes, and, of the fifteen who do not, seven are over sixty-five and therefore not in a position to obtain off-farm employment. In most cases these older operators are no longer supporting families, have presumably fewer debts and are therefore relatively not as poor. One may conclude from this that economic necessity is the basic reason why farmers obtain off-farm employment although it must also be remembered that throughout all the Canadian Prairies there has been a long tradition of off-farm employment.

For Canada as a whole, 45 per cent of small farm operators (with gross annual farm sales under \$5,000) engaged in some off-farm employment during 1966, and 15-20 per cent had full-time or almost full-time jobs (Federal Task Force on Agriculture, 1969, p. 420). In Goodfare 25 per cent of small scale operators worked full-time or almost full-time earning at least 70 per cent of their gross income from off-farm employment (fourteen of these stated that their occupation was not farming) (Figure 18). A further 20 per cent worked off the farm for six months or more each year contributing 50-60 per cent to their gross incomes.

FIGURE 18

GROSS FARM INCOME :GOODFARE 1968-1969



When the contribution of off-farm income is added to gross farm sales, only twenty-one (including seven old age pension farmers) or 25 per cent of the total number of Good-fare farmers still remained below the "poverty level". Table 19 shows a cross-tabulation between those engaged in off-farm employment and gross income range. Chi-square shows a statistical significance only at the 10 per cent level. However,

TABLE 19

OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT AND GROSS INCOME

Gross Income 1968-69 in Dollars	Off-Farm Employment				Total Number
	Yes		No		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Under \$2,000	0	0.0	2	5.4	2
2,000-3,499	1	2.1	6	16.2	7
3,500-4,999	5	10.6	7	19.0	12
5,000-7,499	14	29.8	10	29.0	24
7,500-9,999	11	23.4	2	5.4	13
10,000- 14,999	10	21.3	6	16.2	16
Over 15,000	<u>6</u>	<u>12.8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10.8</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	47	100.0	37	100.0	84

$$\chi^2 = 11.44 \quad \text{d.f.} = 6$$

level of significance = 10%

the table shows that of those engaged in off-farm employment, there are 57.5 per cent who gross over \$7,500 compared with only 32.4 per cent of those not working off the farm.

Of the thirty-nine farmers with gross incomes over

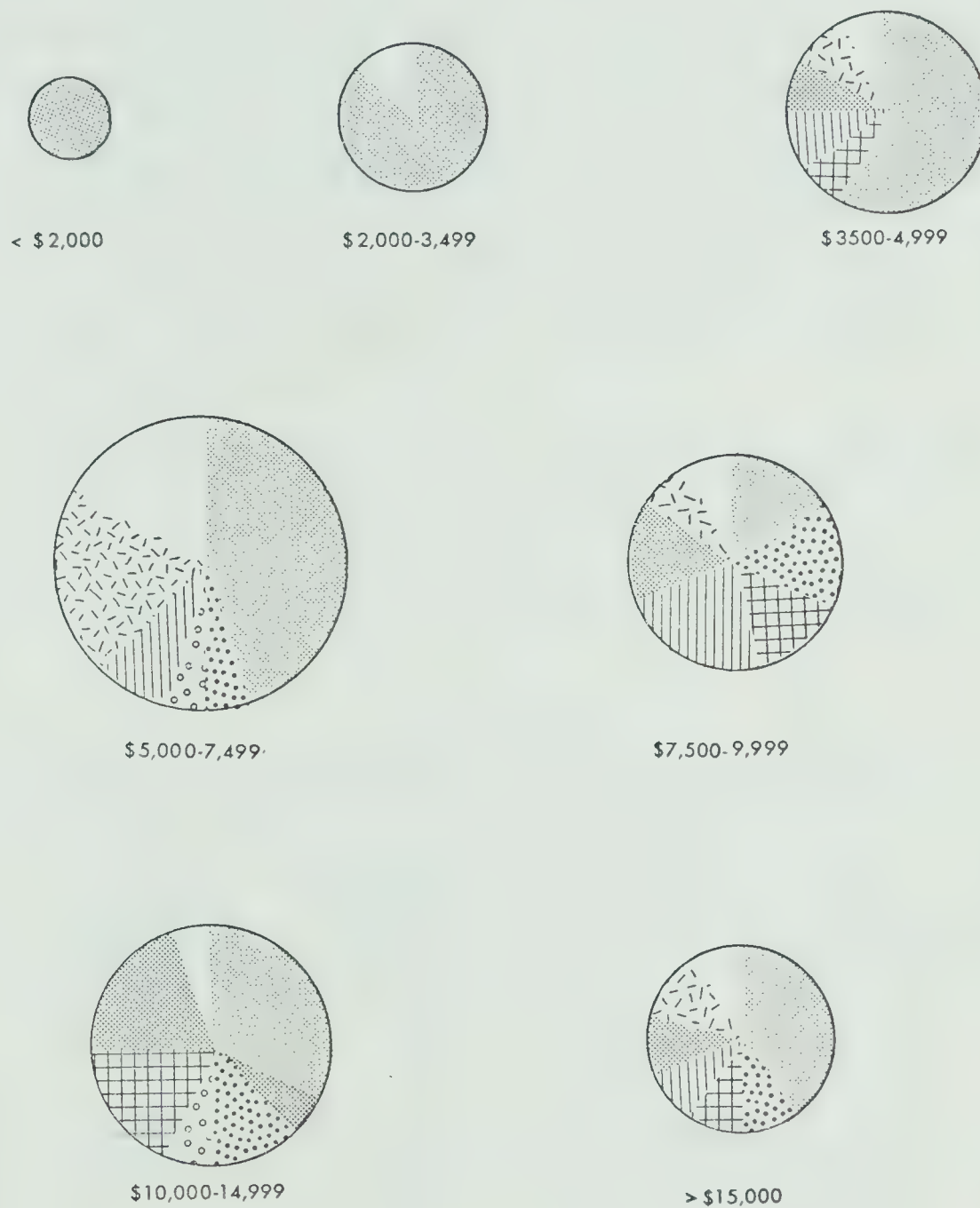
\$7,500, eleven did no off-farm work, ten obtained less than 50 per cent of their income from off-farm work, and eighteen obtained over 50 per cent from off-farm sources (Figure 19). Seven, although operating farms, worked full-time at another occupation and earned at least 65 per cent of their gross income from other occupations. These operators do not consider themselves to be primarily farmers and the success or failure of their farming operations is not critical, as they receive an adequate wage from other employment to support their families.

Twenty-two farmers grossing over \$7,500 have farms which gross under \$5,000 per annum and although they consider themselves to be farmers, they earn a large proportion of their income off the farm. A further ten grossed over \$5,000 from their farms, and in some cases as much as \$10,000 or more but nevertheless they also engage in off-farm work. One cannot therefore assume that their reason for doing so is economic necessity, although in a few cases where there is a large family to support this may be so. One possible reason may be that they are ambitious and need additional capital for expansion or improvement. On the other hand, some operators have always done off-farm work and it may be a way of life for them. It was also suggested that some farmers just like to get away from the farm especially during the winter when there is little to do.

The contribution of off-farm earnings is emphasized if one considers the total net income of farmers. Estimates

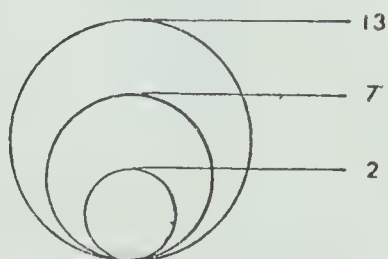
FIGURE 19

PROPORTION OF GROSS INCOME EARNED OFF THE FARM:GOODFARE 1968-1969

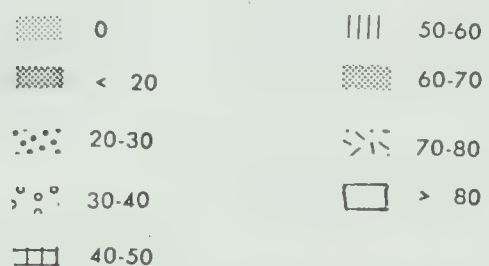


LEGEND

Gross income categories:
Number of farmers



Percentage of income earned off the farm



Source Field Survey

of a farmer's financial state are usually based on his gross farm income and as a crude guide one may assume that the gross income from the farm is approximately twice the net income. On the other hand, the gross income acquired from off-farm work is almost the same as the final net income. Most farmers do not even pay income tax on these earnings as they are written off against farm expenses such as mortgage, depreciation and loans. Therefore, earnings from non-farm work represent a relatively greater source of income than that earned on the farm.

Using the approximate estimate given above the resulting relationship between the net farm and off-farm income of Goodfare farmers has been calculated (Table 20).

TABLE 20

COMPARISON OF NET INCOMES FROM FARM AND NON-FARM SOURCES

Total Gross Income \$	Off-Farm Income \$	Percentage Off-Farm Income	Estimated Net Farm Income \$	Total Net Income \$	Number of Farmers
Under 2,000	0	0	1,000	1,000	2
2-3,500	0	0	1,750	1,750	6
	2,800	85	300	3,100	1
3,500- 5,000	0	0	2,500	2,500	7
	1,250	25	1,875	3,125	1
	2,750	55	1,325	4,075	1
	3,250	65	875	4,125	1
	3,750	75	625	4,375	1
	4,000	85	500	4,500	1

continued

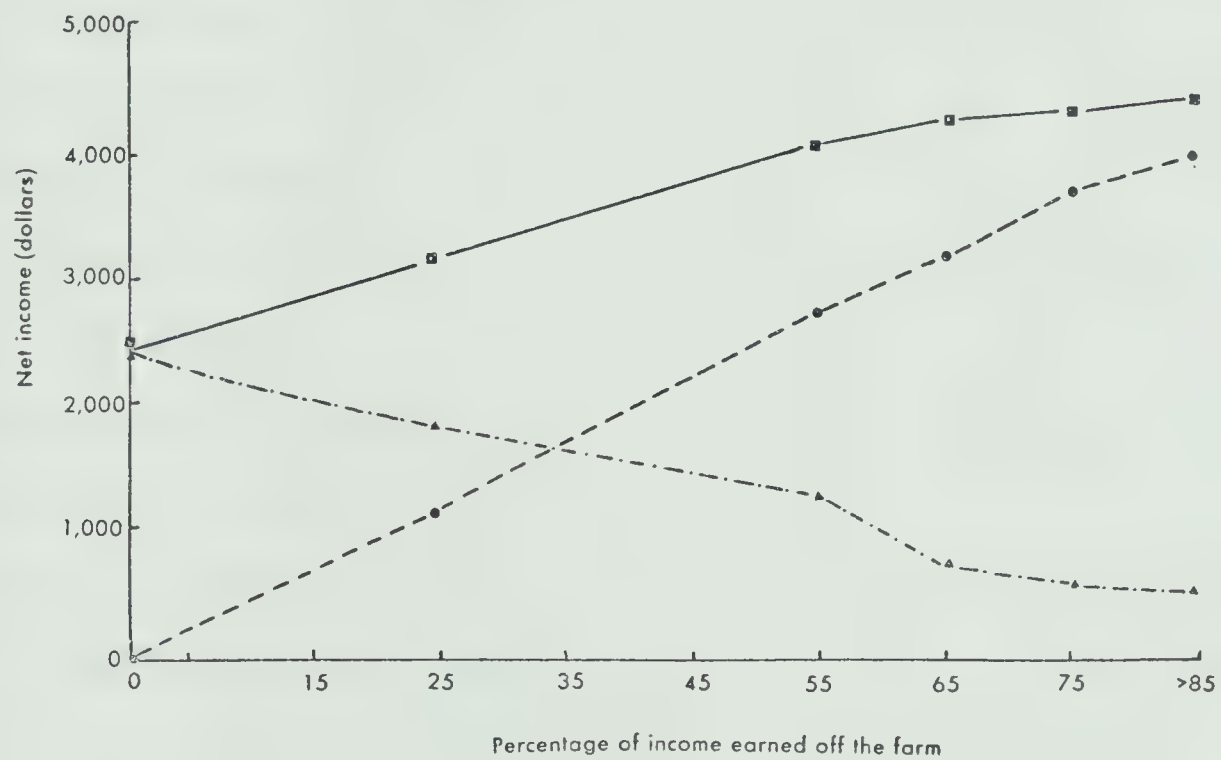
TABLE 20 continued

Total Gross Income \$	Off-Farm Income \$	Percentage Off-Farm Income	Estimated Net Farm Income \$	Total Net Income \$	Number of Farmers
5,000 -	0	0	3,750	3,750	11
7,500	1,875	25	2,812	4,687	1
	2,625	35	2,437	5,062	1
	4,125	55	1,692	5,817	2
	6,025	75	737	6,762	5
	6,375	85	562	6,937	4
7,500-	0	0	5,000	5,000	2
10,000	2,500	25	3,750	6,250	2
	4,500	45	2,750	7,250	2
	5,500	55	2,250	7,750	3
	6,500	65	875	7,375	2
	7,500	75	1,250	8,750	1
	8,500	85	750	9,250	1
10,000-	0	0	7,500	7,500	5
15,000	2,250	15	6,375	8,625	1
	3,750	25	5,675	9,425	2
	5,250	35	4,875	10,125	1
	8,250	55	3,375	11,625	3
	9,750	65	2,625	12,375	3
	12,750	85	1,125	13,875	1
15,000-	0	0	10,000	10,000	4
20,000	5,000	25	7,500	12,500	1
	9,000	45	5,500	14,500	1
	11,000	55	4,500	15,500	1
	13,000	65	3,500	16,500	1
	15,000	75	2,500	17,500	1
	17,000	85	1,500	18,500	1

This is further emphasized in Figure 20 which as an example graphically presents a breakdown of net income figures for Goodfare farmers with a gross income of \$3,500-\$5,000. Within this gross income category total net income ranges from \$2,500 to \$4,500. The increase in net income is directly related to an increasing proportion of gross income earned off the farm.

FIGURE 20

COMPARATIVE NET INCOMES FROM FARM AND
NON-FARM SOURCES OF FARMERS IN THE
GOODFARE DISTRICT WHO GROSSED BETWEEN
\$3,500 AND \$4,999 DURING 1968-1969



LEGEND

- — — • — — Net off-farm income
- △ — — △ — — Net farm income
- — — ■ — — Total net income

The above example is rather hypothetical and serves merely to emphasise the contribution of off-farm earnings, to the total net income. In reality, incomes from farm sales and off-farm work are not so distinctly separated, as a large proportion of the off-farm earnings is ploughed back into the farm to cover operating expenses, thus, in effect, contributing to the final net farm income. However, by considering the two sources of income separately a more realistic estimate of the total operating capital available to the farmer is obtained. Using these figures, and presuming that a net income of \$3,000 represents the poverty level, then only six farmers, compared to twenty-one when using gross income of \$5,000 as the poverty level, have incomes below this.

On the basis of an average wage of \$15 per day, calculations made by the Federal Task Force on Agriculture showed that in Canada 68,000 out of a total of 238,000 farmers with gross farm sales of less than \$5,000, or 28 per cent of small farmers, were raised above the poverty level by off-farm incomes (Federal Task Force on Agriculture, 1969, p. 421).

In Goodfare 57 per cent of small scale operators earned enough to raise them above poverty level. A probable explanation for the higher proportion is that the Task Force assumed a daily income of \$15 per day. Most Goodfare farmers earn more than this, and on jobs with oil and lumber companies can earn twice as much. Thus whereas the Task

Force concluded that for Canada as a whole, "the majority of small farm operators cannot be removed from the poverty category on the basis of their off-farm earnings" (ibid., p. 421) the results of field research in the Goodfare district do not substantiate this, and conversely show that off-farm employment plays a major role in removing small farmers from the poverty class.

The Task Force further states that forms of income other than the operators' wages, such as family allowance, pensions, rent, welfare and dividends probably are as important as off-farm earnings in removing families from the poverty class (ibid., p. 422). In Goodfare, eleven families receive pensions, fifty-nine receive family allowance, one receives welfare, and two receive rent for land. Family allowance is the most widely received source of additional income but this only amounts to about \$100 per year for each child. One may therefore assume that the results of Buckmire's study in Bonnyville, where 84 per cent of those receiving unearned income obtained not more than \$500 per year (Buckmire, 1968, p. 160) are also generally applicable to the Goodfare area. This does not appear to be a very significant amount of money when compared to the amount earned off the farm by many operators.

The Effects of Off-Farm Employment on the Farming Operation

A low income agricultural situation often leads to

the development of an economy based on a dual employment structure. For some farmers, off-farm employment is a permanent part of their economy. In this group there are those whose farm incomes are permanently insufficient for basic living expenses, and also there are those who are more ambitious and wish to improve their farming operations. Other farmers work only as necessary, for example, when there are crop failures as a result of erratic weather conditions or when they specifically require extra capital, perhaps to purchase new machinery. In this context it is significant that approximately 85 per cent of all the farmers in Goodfare had at one time or another worked off the farm, although only 61 per cent did so in 1968-69.

There are certain relationships between the type of farming operations and the incidence of off-farm employment. For example in Chapter III the advantages of stock raising in the Goodfare district were pointed out but when deciding whether or not to keep cattle, the farmer must balance the profits available from off-farm work during the winter compared to those from cattle production. It was mentioned by several farmers that cattle raising was too much work, which might seem to indicate that they prefer a system of farming which allows more flexibility permitting them either to work off the farm or do nothing during the winter months.

Of the forty-five farmers who did keep beef cattle 43 per cent (20) also managed to work off the farm (Table 21).

TABLE 21

CROSS-TABULATION OF THE NUMBER OF BEEF CATTLE KEPT
AND OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT

Number of beef cattle	Off-farm Employment			
	Yes		No	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0	27	56.5	9	25.0
1-4	3	6.5	2	5.5
5-9	4	8.7	1	2.7
10-19	2	4.3	4	11.0
20-29	4	8.7	2	5.5
30-39	1	2.2	4	11.0
40-49	3	6.5	2	5.5
50-59	0	0.0	2	5.5
60-69	0	0.0	3	8.3
70-79	0	0.0	2	5.5
80-89	1	2.2	3	8.3
90-99	0	0.0	1	2.7
100+	<u>2</u>	<u>4.3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5.5</u>
Total	47	100.0	36	100.0
Total operators - 83 ¹				

$$\chi^2 = 26.57 \quad \text{d.f.}=12$$

level of significance = 1%

The chi-square test showed that there was a significant positive relationship at the 1 per cent level of confidence, between farmers who did not engage in off-farm work and the number of beef cattle kept.

Keeping cattle is dependent either on obtaining a job

¹Total of 83 operators--one operator who is a widow has been excluded.

which does not require living away from home, (only six farmers keeping cattle fell within this category), or else having a wife who is capable of looking after the cattle during her husband's absence. However, in most cases the operator is only willing to work at a limited distance from home so that he can return home for a few days every week or two to check on the stock. It was noticeable that the incidence of off-farm work from year to year amongst those keeping stock tended to be rather erratic, depending on such factors as the severity of the winter when the cattle would need extra attention, or illness amongst the stock.

One might expect the size of farm to show some relationship to the incidence of off-farm employment but the cross-tabulation of these factors shown in Table 22 has a chi-square that indicates no significant relationship. However, when the size of farm was cross-tabulated with the proportion of income earned from off-farm employment the chi-square test was significant at the 5 per cent level showing that the proportion of off-farm earnings decreased with increasing size of farms (Table 23).

Although statistically there appeared to be little relationship between any other type of farm operation and the incidence of off-farm employment, it is obvious that there is some positive relationship between those with purely arable farms and those doing off-farm work. Of the twenty-three operating arable farms all but six do off-farm work. Lack of

TABLE 22

CROSS-TABULATION OF SIZE OF FARM AND OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT

Off-farm employment		Size of farm by quarter-sections													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Yes	Number	3	7	12	9	2	8	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	47
	Percent- age	6.5	14.8	26.6	19.1	4.2	17.0	6.5	2.1	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	100
No	Number	2	8	6	6	3	5	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	36
	Percent- age	5.5	22.2	16.5	16.5	8.2	13.7	5.5	2.7	2.7	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	100
Total															83

$$\chi^2 = 6.67 \quad \text{d.f.} = 10$$

level of significance = >10%

TABLE 23

CROSS-TABULATION OF SIZE OF FARM AND PERCENTAGE EARNED OFF THE FARM										
Size of farm in acres	<10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80+	
160	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	
320	1	1	-	-	-	2	1	2	5	
480	-	-	4	-	1	2	3	1	1	
640	-	-	1	1	-	3	1	3	-	
800	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	
960	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	1	2	
1120	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	
1280	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	
1440	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1760	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1920	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2080	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	

$\chi^2 = 92.38$ d.f.=72
 level of significance = 5%

statistical significance is probably due to the small numbers within each category.

The Relationship between Demographic and Social Characteristics and Off-farm Employment

Central to the hypothesis is the differential response to off-farm employment according to age. All cross-tabulations with age, showed a distinction only between the under forty years of age (younger) and over forty years of age (older) operators. When these two age groups were cross-tabulated with the incidence of off-farm employment there was a significant relationship at the 0.5 per cent level. This relationship will be discussed later in this chapter (Table 24).

TABLE 24

AGE AND OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT

Age	Off-farm Employment		Total
	Yes	No	
Under 40	22 81.5%	5 18.5%	27 100%
Over 40	25 44.7%	31 55.3%	56 100%
Total	47	36	83

$$\chi^2 = 7.76 \quad \text{d.f.} = 1$$

level of significance = 0.5%

Ethnic origin, birthplace and educational level were all tested for significance in relationship to the incidence

of off-farm employment, but the results were nil. However, some relationship to educational standards was noted. Of twelve farmers with less than Grade seven education, nine did not engage in off-farm employment (Table 25). This may

TABLE 25
OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL
LEVEL OF FARM OPERATORS

Off-farm employment	Grade									Total
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Yes										
Number	0	0	2	1	18	18	2	3	3	47
Percent- age	0.0	0.0	4.3	2.1	38.3	38.3	4.3	6.4	6.4	100
No										
Number	1	1	2	5	13	7	3	2	2	36
Percent- age	2.7	2.7	5.5	13.6	36.0	19.4	8.1	5.5	5.5	100

$\chi^2 = 9.26$ d.f. = 8
level of significance >10%

reflect a lower achievement level; as all these farmers are over forty, it may merely be a result of age, which restricts them from obtaining off-farm employment. Of the twenty-one farmers who had undertaken further training and therefore had certain skills, fourteen engaged in off-farm work.

Cross-tabulation of the years married and whether or not a farmer engaged in off-farm employment gave a chi-square result significant at the 2.5 per cent level (Table 26). There was a greater incidence of off-farm work amongst

TABLE 26

OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT AND YEARS MARRIED

Years Married	Number	Yes Percent-age	Number	No Percent-age	Total Number	Total Percent-age
Under 2	1	100	0	0.0	1	100
5 - 9	7	70.0	3	30.0	10	100
10 - 14	10	76.9	3	23.1	13	100
15 - 19	13	86.7	2	13.3	15	100
20 - 24	5	35.7	9	64.3	14	100
25 - 29	6	46.2	7	53.8	13	100
30 - 34	2	50.0	2	50.0	2	100
35+	1	16.7	5	83.3	6	100

$\chi^2 = 16.30$ d.f. = 7
level of significance = 2.5%

men married less than twenty years. Seventy-nine per cent of those married less than twenty years worked compared to only 31 per cent of those married longer than this.

This may be due to decreased economic demands on the family as children grow up and leave home. Nalson found a similar situation in Northern England, and commented:

"It would appear that going out to work is the main economic adjustment which farm families in this area make to meet the demands of the family development cycle and of their size of household. Family labour resources are available more in the middle phase than in either the early or late phase, whereas needs are greatest in the early phase and least in the late phase." (Nalson, 1968, p. 57.)¹

¹Nalson defines the phase of family development as follows: a) early phase--in which all the children are under 15; b) middle phase--some of the children of working age live at home and work on or off the farm; c) late phase--all children have left home (Nalson, 1968, p. 54).

Diminishing economic demands from the family, decreasing debts on the farm, as well as advancing age probably combine to result in the decline in off-farm employment after twenty years of marriage.

The number of children living at home bears no significant relationship to off-farm employment although 65 per cent of the sixty-three families still supporting children engaged in off-farm work, compared with only 26 per cent of those having no children at home.

Eighteen wives worked and all but four had husbands who also did off-farm work. There are several possible explanations for this. The farm income may be very low, and the family may need as much additional income as possible. Or, perhaps, if there are no family restrictions or stock the wife may prefer to go with her husband rather than stay at home alone. It is a common occurrence for the camp cook at an oil rig to be the wife of one of the labourers. Psychological factors may also be involved, as the family may feel fewer ties to the "traditional" farm way of life if the husband works off the farm. Eleven wives stated that they worked on the farm and in ten of these cases, the husband did off-farm work. It is probable that the reason the husband is able to work off the farm is because his wife is capable of operating it during his absence.

The Economic and Attitudinal Effects of Off-Farm Employment

The effects of off-farm employment can be examined

from two aspects--economic and attitudinal.

A measure of the economic effects can be obtained from a comparative examination of the improvements made on the farm by those who engage in off-farm employment and those who do not. The improvements to buildings, and houses, increases in stock, the acquisition of new machinery and clearance of land were cross-tabulated with the incidence of off-farm employment. None showed any statistically significant relationship at the 5 per cent level. However, further examination of the data did reveal some differences (Table 27). Improvements to buildings and houses and the increase

TABLE 27

IMPROVEMENTS TO FARM AND OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT

Off-farm employment		Improvements to buildings		Total
		Yes	No	
Yes	Number	5	42	47
	Percentage	10.6	89.4	100
No	Number	8	28	36
	Percentage	22.2	77.8	100

Off-farm employment		Increase in Stock		Total
		Yes	No	
Yes	Number	8	39	47
	Percentage	17.0	83.0	100
No	Number	7	29	36
	Percentage	19.4	80.6	100

TABLE 27 continued:

Off-farm employment		New Machinery		Total
		Yes	No	
Yes	Number	30	17	47
	Percentage	63.8	36.2	100
No	Number	16	20	36
	Percentage	44.4	55.6	100

Off-farm employment		Improved House		Total
		Yes	No	
Yes	Number	13	34	47
	Percentage	27.7	72.3	100
No	Number	9	27	36
	Percentage	25.0	75.0	100

Off-farm Employment		Improved Land		Total
		Yes	No	
Yes	Number	16	31	47
	Percentage	34.0	66.0	100
No	Number	6	30	36
	Percentage	16.9	83.1	100

of stock showed almost identical results between those working off the farm and those not. However, a greater proportion of those working off the farm, 64 per cent, compared to 44 per cent of those not working off the farm, obtained new machinery, also 34 per cent working off the farm cleared land compared to only 17 per cent of those not working. It is possible that those working off the farm are able to afford

to make more improvements which are not absolutely essential to the operation of the farm. Certainly it indicates that those doing off-farm work are not neglecting their farms by doing so. In fact, over all, more improvements were made by those working off.

The incidence of off-farm employment and the occupation a farm operator would choose if not farming show no statistical significance but as can be seen in Table 28, certain differences are discernible. For example, of those who

TABLE 28

OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION FARM OPERATOR
WOULD CHOOSE IF NOT FARMING

Type of Employ- ment	Yes		No		Total Number
	Number	Percent- age	Number	Percent- age	
Lumbering	5	10.6	0	0.0	5
Oil	7	14.8	0	0.0	7
Sales	2	4.3	0	0.0	2
Auctioneer	2	4.3	0	0.0	2
Trucking	3	6.4	1	3.5	4
CAT Operator	2	4.3	0	0.0	2
Construction	6	12.8	1	3.9	7
Outdoor Work	6	12.8	5	19.3	11
Own Boss	7	14.8	4	15.5	11
Don't Know	6	12.8	15	57.8	21
Gas Station	<u>1</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	47	100.0	26	100.0	73 ¹

$\chi^2 = 0.47$ d.f. = 2
level of significance = >10%

¹"Active" farm operators only included.

did not engage in off-farm employment, only one replied that he would choose lumbering, oil work, trucking, sales or CAT operating, all of which are common off-farm occupations, whereas 49 per cent of all those working off the farm stated that they would choose these jobs. Fifty-eight per cent of those not working off said that they did not know what occupations they would choose compared with only 13 per cent of those working off the farm who gave this reply. A further 35 per cent of those not working off replied that they would choose an occupation where they could "work outdoors" or "be their own boss" compared with 28 per cent of the off-farm workers who gave this response. In fact of those not working off the farm only 7 per cent stated a precise occupation in which they would engage if not farming compared with 59 per cent of those working off the farm. This substantiates the findings of other researchers such as Fliegel (1960), Gerschwind and Ruttan (1961), and Buckmire (1966), that operators become more aware of alternative job opportunities by working off the farm.

Central to this study is the effect that off-farm employment has on an operator's attitude towards migration.

Although chi-square tests showed no significant statistical relationship between these two factors an examination of Tables 29a and 29b, shows that certain attitudinal differences are discernible. It can be seen that in Table 29b, of all those who have considered moving, 70.9 per cent

OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS MIGRATION

TABLE 29a

Off-farm employment		Considered Moving		Total
		Yes	No	
Yes	Number	22	25	47
	Percentage	46.8	53.2	100
No	Number	9	27	36
	Percentage	25.0	75.0	100
Total	Number	31	52	83
	Percentage	37.3	62.7	100

TABLE 29b

Off-farm employment		Considered Moving		Total Number and Percentage	
		Yes	No		
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes		22	70.9	25	48.0
No		9	29.1	27	52.0
Total		31	100.0	52	100.0

do off-farm work. However, as seen in Table 29a, this represents only 46.8 per cent of all those working off the farm. On the other hand, Table 29a also shows that of those who have not considered moving, 75.0 per cent also do no off-farm work, however this represents only 52 per cent of the total number who have not considered moving.

One may conclude that the causes and effects of off-farm employment are largely economic although to some extent

attitudinal. The greatest impact is in raising many farmers with low farm incomes above the poverty level, although it also appears to increase awareness of job opportunity. Its effect on the decision to migrate, however, cannot be determined until other contributing factors have been examined.

The Effect of Age on Off-Farm Employment and Mobility

Buckmire states that "Age stands out as one of the most important single factors influencing the decision-making process of an individual." (Buckmire, 1966, p. 57). In terms of its effect on the decision to migrate Heady in a study in Iowa concluded that younger farm families were more concerned with improving their economic status, whereas older families were more concerned with making farming a way of life (Heady et al., 1953, p. 31). This section of the study examines factors related to age in an attempt to see if similar conclusions can be reached about the Goodfare population. For the purposes of cross-tabulation only two age categories, "younger" (under forty years of age) and "older" (over forty) have been used.

Effects of Age on the Farming Operation

The size of farm operated bore no statistically significant relationship to the age of the farmer, although, of the five farmers owning nine quarter sections or more, all were over forty years of age (Table 30). This does not support Buckmire's findings in the Bonnyville area where he

TABLE 30
SIZE OF FARM AND AGE OF OPERATORS

Size of farm (acres)	Age of Operator				Total
	Under Forty		Over Forty		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
160	1	3.7	4	7.0	5
320	1	3.7	15	26.3	16
480	8	29.6	10	17.5	18
640	4	14.8	11	19.3	15
800	3	11.1	2	3.5	5
960	6	22.2	7	12.3	13
1120	3	11.1	2	3.5	5
1280	1	3.7	1	1.8	2
1440	0	0.0	2	3.5	2
1600	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
1760	0	0.0	2	3.5	2
1920	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
2080+	0	0.0	1	1.8	1
Total	27	100.0	57	100.0	84

concluded that younger¹ farmers operated bigger farms (Buckmire, 1966, p. 112).

Statistically at the 5 per cent level there appeared to be little significant difference between the two age groups and whether or not beef cattle were kept (Table 31). However, of the thirty-eight farmers who did not keep beef cattle, twenty-six were over forty years of age. On the

¹Buckmire distinguishes three age categories: younger, 15-34; middle age, 35-49; and older, over 50.

TABLE 31
NUMBER OF BEEF CATTLE AND AGE OF OPERATOR

Number of beef cattle	Age of Operator				Total
	Under Forty		Over Forty		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
0	11	40.7	26	45.6	37
1-4	1	3.7	4	7.0	5
5-9	1	3.7	3	5.3	4
10-19	2	7.4	6	10.5	8
20-29	2	7.4	3	5.3	5
30-39	1	3.7	4	7.0	5
40-49	3	11.2	1	1.8	4
50-59	2	7.4	0	0.0	2
60-69	0	0.0	3	5.3	3
70-79	0	0.0	2	3.5	2
80-89	2	7.4	2	3.5	4
90-99	0	0.0	1	1.8	1
100+	<u>2</u>	<u>7.4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	27	100.0	57	100.0	84

other hand, thirty one herds were owned by farmers over forty, compared with only sixteen by those under. Of the sixteen herds with over fifty head of cattle, ten were owned by older farmers. One may speculate that there may be some correlation between this and the fact that proportionally fewer men over forty work off the farm and are therefore able to care for the cattle all the year round.

A statistically significant difference at the 5 per cent level was found, however, between the two age groups and the acreage under crops (Table 32). It would appear that the younger farmers have larger acreages under crops.

TABLE 32

ACREAGE UNDER CROPS AND AGE OF OPERATOR

Acreage under crops	Age of Operator				Total
	Under Forty		Over Forty		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
0	1	3.7	2	3.5	3
0-49	0	0.0	4	7.0	4
50-99	4	14.8	8	14.0	12
100-149	5	18.6	14	24.6	19
150-199	3	11.1	9	15.8	12
200-249	2	7.4	8	14.0	10
250-299	3	11.1	3	5.3	6
300-349	1	3.7	4	7.0	5
350-399	2	7.4	0	0.0	2
400-499	3	11.1	0	0.0	3
450-549	0	0.0	1	1.8	1
550-649	2	7.4	2	3.5	4
650+	<u>1</u>	<u>3.7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	27	100.0	57	100.0	84

$$\chi^2 = 38.22$$

$$d.f. = 24$$

level of significance = 5%

Other factors of the farm economy were cross-tabulated with age, such as the amount of newly broken land, the number of dairy cattle, pigs and sheep but none was statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. The only variable found to be significantly correlated with age was the number of poultry kept. This showed a relationship at the 0.5 per cent level of significance, but no conclusions can be drawn from this.

The type of farming operation and the age of operator did show a significant relationship at the 2.5 per cent level (Table 33). A greater proportion of those over 40 had purely arable farms but as pointed out previously, younger farmers tended to have larger acreages on their farms under crops despite the fact that the majority of them operated mixed farms.

TABLE 33

AGE OF OPERATOR AND TYPE OF FARMING OPERATION

Age	Type of Farm				Total
	Arable	Stock	Mixed	Land rented out	
Under 40	7	0	19	1	27
	25.9%	0.0%	70.4%	3.7%	100%
Over 40	19	1	35	2	57
	33.3%	1.8%	61.4%	3.5%	<u>100%</u>
Total					84

$$\chi^2 = 14.98$$

$$\text{d.f.} = 6$$

level of significance - 2.5%

Effects of Age on Social and Demographic Factors

When age was cross-tabulated with the relationship of the previous owner to the present operator, a significant correlation at the 0.5 per cent level resulted showing that many more younger operators were related to the previous owner, whereas only six operators under forty were not related to the previous owner, forty-four over forty were not (Table 2, p. 50). This may be due to the fact that at the

time when the "older" operators commenced farming land was easier to acquire, and thus, rather than waiting to take over their fathers' farms they would start farming elsewhere. More recently however, high prices and a shortage of available land has often made it a necessity for a younger farmer to take over his father's farm if he wishes to go into farming. There has also been an increasing tendency recently for older farmers to retire, rather than operating their farms until their deaths, thus permitting their sons to take over.

A significant relationship was also found between birthplace and age of operator (Table 34). Of those under

TABLE 34

AGE OF OPERATOR AND BIRTHPLACE

Birthplace	Age				Total
	Under Forty		Over Forty		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Goodfare	14	51.9	4	7.0	18
Beaverlodge	3	11.1	1	1.8	4
Peace	1	3.7	2	3.5	3
Alberta	6	22.2	13	22.8	19
Saskatchewan	3	11.1	5	8.7	8
Elsewhere-Canada	0	0.0	9	15.8	9
U.S.A.	0	0.0	4	7.0	4
Germany	0	0.0	4	7.0	4
Scandinavia	0	0.0	3	5.3	3
Britain	0	0.0	2	3.5	2
Elsewhere-Europe	0	0.0	9	15.8	9
Elsewhere	0	0.0	1	1.8	1
Total	27	100.0	57	100.0	84

$\chi^2 = 38.29$ d.f. = 11 level of significance = 0.5%

forty all but three (who were born in Saskatchewan) had been born in Alberta, compared with 60 per cent of those over forty who were born outside the province.

One would expect to find a close relationship between age and education. However, in Goodfare this was lower than anticipated (Table 4, p. 59). The chi-square result was significant at only the 10 per cent level. (This may be partly a result of the relatively small population sampled and the large number of educational categories.)

However, cross-tabulations did show that of those over forty, sixteen had been educated only to Grade seven or less, compared with none in the under forty age group with less than Grade eight. On the other hand, five operators over forty had completed Grade twelve compared with none in the younger age group. In both age groups, 30 per cent had taken other training.

Age and Off-Farm Employment

It can be seen in Table 24, (p. 116) that there is a significant difference in the incidence of off-farm employment depending on the age of the operator. Of those under forty, 81 per cent (22) engaged in off-farm employment compared to only 46 per cent (24) of those over forty. However, in terms of actual numbers, there are slightly more men over forty working off the farm.

There is no statistical difference between age and

the type of work engaged in although proportionately, a greater percentage of the older farmers, 20 per cent compared to 4 per cent, were engaged as craftsmen, especially carpenters, and slightly fewer over forty had jobs as labourers. In oil and lumber work, only seven out of eighteen were over forty, which would seem to indicate that older farmers have more difficulty obtaining this type of work or else prefer not to.

Younger operators were also prepared to work further away from home. Twenty-seven per cent of the younger operators had jobs 300 miles or more from home compared to only 4 per cent of those over forty. Also a greater proportion, 72 per cent, of the younger operators live away from home whilst working compared to 52 per cent of older operators.

More farm operators over forty have wives working and there is a significant correlation at the 5 per cent level. This is probably a reflection of the fact that their children are older and either in school or already grown up, thus making it easier for the wife to leave the farm to work.

Age and Income

Gross income figures show only a slight statistical difference between age groups (Table 35), and the chi-square result is significant only at the 10 per cent level. However, proportionately more younger operators, 62 per cent, have gross incomes of \$7,500 or more compared to 37 per cent of those over forty, and whereas 35 per cent of those over

TABLE 35
AGE OF OPERATOR AND GROSS INCOME

Gross Income	Age				Total
	Under Forty		Over Forty		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Under \$2,000	0	0.0	2	3.5	2
2,000-3,499	1	3.7	6	10.5	7
3,500-4,999	1	3.7	11	19.3	12
5,000-7,499	8	29.6	16	28.2	24
7,500-9,999	8	29.6	5	8.7	13
10,000-14,999	5	18.5	11	19.3	16
15,000+	<u>4</u>	<u>14.8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10.5</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	27	100.0	57	100.0	84

$\chi^2 = 11.53$ d.f. = 6
level of significance = 10%

forty grossed \$5,000 only 7 per cent of those under forty did so. Buckmire also found that younger operators grossed higher returns, but that as they had higher capital expenses and were more indebted than older farmers, their net returns were in fact lower (Buckmire, 1966, p. 112). However, when those presently engaged in off-farm employment were asked if they could support their families without engaging in off-farm work, 36 per cent of the younger operators replied that they could, compared to 21 per cent of older operators.

The percentage of the gross income earned off the farm showed little significant difference between the age groups, and it was not possible to draw any further conclusions from the figures (Table 36).

TABLE 36

AGE OF OPERATOR AND PERCENTAGE OF INCOME
FROM OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT

Percentage of Income From Off-Farm Employment	Age of Operator				Total
	Under Forty		Over Forty		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
0	5	18.6	32	56.2	37
<10	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
10-20	0	0.0	1	1.8	1
20-30	4	14.8	3	5.3	7
30-40	2	7.4	0	0.0	2
40-50	1	3.7	2	3.5	3
50-60	5	18.6	5	8.7	10
60-70	4	14.8	3	5.3	7
70-80	3	11.1	5	8.7	8
80+	<u>3</u>	<u>11.1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10.5</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	27	100.0	57	100.0	84

Age and Farm Improvement

No statistically significant difference was discernible in improvements done on the farm and the age of the operator, although proportionately more younger operators are increasing their stock. Sixty-three per cent of younger operators acquired new machinery compared to 53 per cent of older operators and 33 per cent of younger operators improved their houses compared to 22 per cent in the older age group.

Age and Migration

The effect of age on whether or not an operator had considered moving showed no significant relationship, 44 per

cent of the under forty age group stated that they had considered moving compared to 35 per cent of the older age group. However, the latter represented 65 per cent of all those who had considered moving (Table 37).

TABLE 37

AGE OF OPERATOR AND WHETHER HE HAS CONSIDERED MOVING

		Considered Moving		Total
		Yes	No	
Under Forty	Number	12	15	27
	Percentage	44.4	55.6	
Over Forty	Number	20	37	57
	Percentage	35.0	65.0	
Total		32	52	84

The reasons given by those who had considered moving did show a significant difference with age giving a chi-square result significant at the 2.5 per cent level (Table 38). Forty-two per cent of younger farmers stated that there was no future in farming compared to 21 per cent of the older operators. However, 38 per cent of the older operators compared to 11 per cent of younger farmers said they had considered moving for financial reasons. This may point to the fact that on the whole, younger operators are financially better off. Seven older operators gave retirement as a reason for considering moving.

TABLE 38

AGE OF OPERATOR AND REASON FOR CONSIDERING MOVING

Reason for considering moving	Age				Total Number and Percentage	
	Under Forty		Over Forty			
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		
No future in farming	5	41.7	3	15.0	8	25.0
Financial reasons	2	16.7	9	45.0	11	34.5
Because of children	1	8.3	0	0.0	1	3.1
To obtain better job	3	25.0	0	0.0	3	9.4
Health	0	0.0	1	5.0	1	3.1
Retirement	0	0.0	7	35.0	7	21.8
Other	1	8.3	0	0.0	1	3.1
Total	12	100.0	20	100.0	32	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 23.65$$

$$\text{d.f.} = 12$$

level of significance = 2.5%

It is often stated that older farmers have greater attachment to the local area and are therefore less willing to migrate. Approximately 75 per cent of both age groups said that they like living in the Goodfare district, although the reasons given for liking it differed somewhat (Tables 39 and 40). Most notable was the fact that twelve (27 per cent) of the older age group stated that they liked it because it was their home compared to only two (10 per cent) of the younger operators, which seems to indicate perhaps some deeper attachment. This is despite the fact that fourteen (52 per cent)

TABLE 39

AGE OF OPERATOR AND LOCAL ATTACHMENT

Like Living in District	Age				Total Number and Percentage	
	Under Forty		Over Forty			
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		
Yes	20	74.1	45	78.9	65	77.5
No	2	7.4	3	5.3	5	5.9
Non-committal	<u>5</u>	<u>18.5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>15.8</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16.6</u>
Total	27	100.0	57	100.0	84	100.0

TABLE 40

AGE OF OPERATOR AND REASONS FOR LIKING GOODFARE

Reasons for liking Goodfare	Age				Total Number and Percentage	
	Under Forty		Over Forty			
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		
Family and friends here	6	30.0	11	24.4	17	26.2
Good neighbour- hood	12	60.0	22	48.9	34	52.4
Home	<u>2</u>	<u>10.0</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>26.7</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>21.4</u>
Total	20	100.0	45	100.0	65	100.0

of the younger operators were born and raised in Goodfare compared to only four (6 per cent) of those over forty.

A further indication of differential attitudes to migration can be seen from the types of occupation operators would choose if not farming (Table 41). In the over forty

TABLE 41

AGE OF OPERATOR AND TYPE OF OCCUPATION IF NOT FARMING

Type of Occupation	Age				Total Number and Percentage	
	Under Forty		Over Forty			
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		
Lumber	3	11.1	2	4.3	5	6.8
Oil	4	14.8	3	6.5	7	9.6
Sales	1	3.7	1	2.2	2	2.7
Auctioneer	1	3.7	1	2.2	2	2.7
Trucking	1	3.7	3	6.5	4	5.5
CAT Operator	2	7.4	0	0.0	2	2.7
Construction	3	11.1	4	8.7	7	9.6
Outdoor Work	2	7.4	9	19.6	11	15.1
Own Boss	4	14.8	7	15.2	11	15.1
Don't Know	5	18.6	16	34.8	21	28.8
Gas Station	<u>1</u>	<u>3.7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1.4</u>
Total	27	100.0	46	100.0	73 ¹	100.0

age group, 65 per cent had no definite ideas as to what they would do compared to only 33 per cent of the younger age group. This seems to indicate that the younger operators have given alternative employment more thought whereas few older operators have really considered leaving farming.

The Relationship of Off-Farm Employment and Age to Mobility

The preceding section considered the two major variables which were selected in this study to be examined in relationship to mobility. Other variables which one may associate with potential mobility such as education, alternative

¹"Active" farm operators only.

job training, personal attitudes, family structure and farm income have been considered only in relationship to off-farm employment and age as a complete examination of the effect of these variables on migration is beyond the scope of this study. The concluding section relates off-farm employment and age to mobility in an attempt to prove the hypothesis.

Effects of Off-Farm Employment on Mobility

As concluded earlier, the major effect of off-farm employment is in terms of increased income. One must therefore determine what effect this increased income has on migration. Farm operators are certainly aware that in giving up farming and moving elsewhere it is necessary to have a certain amount of capital. Eight farmers (23 per cent) who had considered moving stated that the reason they had not done so was because they could not get an "acceptable price" for their land. One might speculate that those working off the farm save some of their earnings in order to obtain enough to make a satisfactory move. However, not one replied that any of the money earned off the farm was saved. Instead, it was all invested back into the farm. Sixty-two farmers, of which thirty-five did off-farm work, made some improvements, increased stock or land clearing. This would add to the value of the property if the operator wished, or was able, to sell his farm, but on the other hand, if a person is seriously contemplating migration, it seems unlikely that he would invest his money in the farm particularly when the market for

small farms is poor. It would appear that for many farmers working off the farm merely makes up the deficiency between farm income and an acceptable standard of living. Most farmers have annual debts to credit companies or machinery dealers and off-farm work is a satisfactory way of ensuring that cash is available to meet these commitments. Rather than encouraging a farmer to migrate it would appear that the effect of off-farm employment is often the reverse since it provides him with enough money to keep the farm operating from year to year thus strengthening his commitment to it.

Knowledge of alternative job opportunities and a certain amount of experience is gained by working off the farm and the results of cross-tabulations showed that those working off the farm had more definite ideas about alternative forms of employment. Nevertheless a major drawback to migrating which faces many farmers is finding alternative employment. In Goodfare, eighteen farm operators, fourteen of whom gross under \$5,000 from farm sales, have full-time non-farm jobs and so are not faced with this problem. Despite this, they still do not give up their farms. One might speculate that this may be due to some deeper, perhaps psychological attachment to the land. In fact, all but five of the eighteen stated that one day they hoped to be full-time farmers.

The effects of age on off-farm employment are fairly obvious. Younger operators, according to Buckmire have more

debts to repay (Buckmire, 1966, p. 112). They also have all their children still dependent upon them and therefore need extra capital. The older operator has declining responsibility to the family and diminishing debts to pay. Young men are also able to perform heavier manual jobs for which the highest wages are paid. This is not to say, however, that older men do not work off the farm, as experience is often important. However, most older men earn less off the farm than do younger operators. They work mainly as camp cooks, carpenters and truck drivers. It has been found in studies of rural areas that a high correlation exists between age and educational levels but this is not especially true at Goodfare. Certainly none under forty had less than Grade eight, but none had Grade twelve education which is a definite disadvantage in competing for alternative employment. Buckmire's findings in Bonnyville were similar; he concluded that more years of schooling were a "relative advantage enabling the younger men to become better farm operators but did not provide them with enough education to encourage them to migrate from the farms and compete successfully for good non-farm jobs." (Buckmire, 1966, p. 113.)

Differential Effects of Off-Farm Employment Depending on Age

There is no doubt that a man over forty will encounter greater difficulty finding a full-time non-farm job than a younger man.

Younger men are often encouraged to move from low income farms with government aid. The Canadian Federal Task Force on Agriculture suggested two solutions to the low-income farm problem designed to help younger people under forty-five. It suggested a Manpower programme to move men out of agriculture into urban jobs and also a programme of industry dispersion to make more jobs available in outlying areas and smaller centers (Federal Task Force on Agriculture, 1969, p. 422).

For those over forty-five the recommendations were different. The Task Force stated that for these older operators with few alternative skills the best programmes are probably those which keep them on the farm, help them make some minor improvements, provide income supplements and encourage their children to higher levels of education with broader perspectives (ibid., p. 422).

Certainly the prospects for an older man wishing to give up farming are poor, as without any skills he faces a poorly paid urban job. Fortunately most older farmers have no desire to migrate except when their health fails and they reach retirement age. Of the twenty-four farmers over forty in Goodfare who said that they had considered moving, seven (30 per cent) were of retirement age.

It can be seen in Table 24 (p. 116) showing the relationship between age and off-farm employment that in terms of numbers the off-farm labour force consists of slightly more operators over forty. However, as mentioned previously, off-farm

jobs, although available to older farmers are usually lower paying jobs than those obtainable by younger farmers. Of the thirty farmers over forty who did not engage in off-farm work, fifteen were grossing over \$5,000 from farm sales. The remaining fifteen operated non-commercial farms grossing under \$5,000. However, seven of these were over sixty-five and with only one exception, the rest were over fifty-five. It seems likely that many of the older farmers who did not work off the farm did not necessarily need to as they would on the whole have fewer, if any, dependent children still at home.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

In this study the effects of off-farm employment on a low-income agricultural community have been considered. The general conclusions are presented first, followed by a more specific examination of the findings related to the hypothesis that "off-farm employment impedes the mobility of older farm operators but encourages the mobility of younger farm operators".

General Conclusions

At least 60 per cent of farmers in the Goodfare area earn part, and in some cases the greater proportion of their annual income from off-farm employment. Fifty-eight per cent of all Goodfare farmers gross under \$5,000 per annum from their farms. Some of these are over sixty-five years of age and do not work off the farm but the remainder require an additional source of income in order to operate their farms.

Economic necessity is clearly the main reason why most farmers have engaged in part-time non-farm jobs, although to some it has become a "way of life" and they continue to work off the farm although it is no longer economically essential. In most cases all the money earned at

non-farm jobs is invested in the farming operation. Farm improvements are slightly more numerous amongst those engaging in off-farm work which would seem to indicate that their intentions are to continue farming rather than accrue sufficient capital to migrate.

Although the economic effects of off-farm employment are most obvious other effects were also revealed in the study. In some cases the type of farming operation is affected. Despite the fact that the Goodfare area is best suited to forage production and stock raising, because of high risks of crop loss, 65 per cent of the farmers continue to rely on crop production for the greater proportion of their farm income. It would appear that many farmers prefer to take risks producing arable crops and engage in off-farm employment, which provides them with some insurance against total financial loss. Unless a farmer's wife is competent, and able to take care of stock it is difficult for a farmer raising cattle to engage in off-farm employment. We therefore find that many farmers with younger families do not keep stock.

The Goodfare district has a well-developed community spirit and although this can largely be attributed to the competent leadership of a few local farmers it may also be a result of the fact that many farmers are away from home for several weeks or months at a time, and during these periods their families are often reliant on assistance from neighbours.

Also as a result of off-farm employment there is greater awareness of job opportunities amongst those working off the farm. This does not necessarily imply that those farmers engaging in off-farm work are more inclined to leave farming, but, simply, that they are more aware of other opportunities.

The attitudes of older and younger farmers will now be examined separately.

The "Older" Farmer

If one assumes that migration for most farm operators over forty is undesirable, and that most farmers do not want to give up farming, then the role of off-farm employment is an important one. Forty-four per cent (25) of the farmers over forty living in the Goodfare district engage in off-farm employment and for 61 per cent of these, it provides the means of living above the poverty level however defined. Only four men over forty whose farms operate on a commercial basis do off-farm work which indicates that in the case of older farmers, usually only those who must work off the farm do so. Men over forty operate 68 per cent of the "commercial" farms in the area.

Buckmire concluded that in Bonnyville "younger farm operators had achieved a more satisfactory economic position on the farm than the older operators . . . and were less willing to leave farming." (Buckmire, 1966, p. 114). In Goodfare, however, there appeared to be no statistically significant relationship between the age of the operator and

the success of the farm. Management ability, a reflection of education, experience and inherent ability, seemed a much more important factor. During the course of interviewing in the study area, good management ability seemed more apparent amongst some of the older operators. However, due to their relatively small number, this relationship is not revealed in the statistical analysis of age and the success of the farm. However, of the nine farmers who were grossing over \$10,000 from farm sales alone, eight were between the ages of forty-five and fifty-nine.

If a farmer earns an acceptable wage either solely from the farm or with the additional help of off-farm income, then it is likely that he has little desire to migrate. The farmers who might be most discontented with their economic state are those living below the poverty level. Six farmers despite working off the farm, still do not earn enough to gross over \$5,000. Of these, five are over forty.

For these older farmers operating "non-commercial" farms, off-farm employment is to many a "way of life" and an important part of their economic situation. In the Peace River District, off-farm work has been readily available since the early days of settlement at the beginning of the century. At first, road and railway building and land clearing provided a convenient source of off-farm work and more recently the advent of extensive oil and lumbering operations has provided an even greater opportunity for work. Unlike some marginal farming areas where off-farm work is only a

recent innovation, for example in the U.S.A. in areas of industrial expansion, (Alleger, 1964; Loomis, et al., 1962) the Peace River District has a history of off-farm employment. The very nature of homesteading has meant that other work has often been a necessity; off-farm employment is therefore accepted as the "norm" rather than the exception.

The hypothesis formulated was that off-farm employment impeded the mobility of older farm operators, but encouraged the mobility of younger farm operators. The results of this study certainly substantiate the first section, as the effect of off-farm employment on older operators appears to be a stabilizing one.

The "Younger" Farmer

In the case of the younger operator, there are more forces encouraging his migration. He has the advantage of being young enough to retrain for alternative employment and in fact the government is encouraging him to do so. However, if one considers the poverty level (as defined in this study) to be the point at which economic considerations override other factors, then all but three have total gross incomes above \$5,000 despite the fact that only ten (35 per cent) of the farmers under forty operate what is considered to be a commercial farm. This is a result of the high incidence of off-farm employment amongst younger operators, which makes it possible for 69 per cent of them to raise their income above poverty level.

Attachment to the community is a factor which one usually associates with older people. However, there was little difference in attitudes between age groups concerning living in the Goodfare district. Fifty-two per cent of the younger operators had taken over the farm from their parents, and from this it might be assumed that certain psychological attachments exist. However, since distance between family members is of less significance today than a generation ago, an attachment to the "land" rather than to the family may be more relevant. Certainly a deterrent factor to migration for some younger operators is the desire to raise their family in the country.

For the younger operator there are fewer barriers to migration than for the older operators (although they do exist as he is unskilled, less aware of the job opportunities than his urban counterpart and not quite as well educated). It is often assumed that a young operator will want to move if there is a possibility of improving his economic situation. However, one cannot always quantify the reasons for a person not migrating. It appears from this study that unless an operator's economic situation was very marginal, then such factors as attachment to the land may have an important influence on this decision. This supports the findings of Luebke and Hart in a region of the Southern Appalachians. They concluded that, "great value is placed upon environments and associations that are familiar and comparatively certain as against an inevitably uncertain 'pot of gold' somewhere

else" (Luebke and Fraser Hart, 1958, p. 51). All of the younger operators in Goodfare were brought up on farms and are farming because they like it. This factor weighs heavily in favour of their staying on the farm rather than moving to an urban job and an unfamiliar way of life that is not, for them, as pleasant, despite a higher income. By working off the farm all except three younger farmers gross \$5,000 which although comparatively low compared to income from other jobs, is not considered to be below poverty level.

The type of off-farm work done by many farmers is often of a seasonal nature such as oil drilling, lumbering or construction and these offer only limited opportunity for full-time employment. Thus the jobs in which the farmer gets experience are not satisfactory as an alternative form of full-time employment. However, these jobs pay well and thus the farmer can combine the best of both worlds by being able to earn a good wage for part of the year and yet still farm.

The hypothesis that off-farm employment encourages younger farm operators to migrate cannot be proved in the study area, in fact the opposite would appear true. It provides a means of paying debts incurred throughout the year and sometimes also improving the farm, thus strengthening the commitment of the operator to the farm. It also provides a certain optimism, because even if crops fail, it does not mean financial disaster because well paid off-farm work is available and by means of gradual expansion, the younger

operator can look forward to a better future. Even if he never operates a successful farm then to many farmers a situation where off-farm employment is a permanent part of the farm economy is often preferable to a full-time non-agricultural occupation.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Address: _____

Location: _____

Farm Details

1.
 - 1) Size of farm--owned and rented land, acres? _____
 - 2) Acreage of improved grassland? (hay and pasture) _____
 - 3) Acreage under crops? _____
 - 4) Acreage of newly broken land lying idle? _____
 - 5) Acreage of summer fallow? _____
 - 6) Acreage of unimproved grassland? _____
 - 7) Acreage of uncleared land? _____
2. Number of livestock?
 - 1) Hogs? _____
 - 2) Dairy cattle? _____
 - 3) Beef cattle? _____
 - 4) Poultry? _____
 - 5) Horses? _____
 - 6) Sheep? _____
3. Do you 1) Own (acreage)? _____ or 2) Rent? _____
the farm or parts of it.
4. Type of farm?
 - 1) Arable? _____
 - 2) Stock Raising? _____
 - 3) Dairy? _____
 - 4) Mixed? _____
 - 5) Other? _____
 - 6) Land rented out? _____

5. Have you cleared any land since acquiring the farm?
 _____ acres.
6. What year did you start farming here? _____
7. Did you farm anywhere else before? Yes _____, No _____
 If 'yes' 1) For how many years? _____
 2) Where? _____
8. What date was the land first homesteaded? _____
9. Was the previous occupier of the farm related to you?
 _____ (State relationship)
10. What happened to him? 1) Deceased _____
 2) Retired to _____ (State location) 3) Migrated
 to _____ (State location)
 If migrated, what was his occupation after leaving the
 farm? _____

Demographic and Social Details (Resident Population)

- | | <u>Husband</u> | <u>Wife</u> |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| 11. Date of birth? | _____ | _____ |
| 12. Place of birth? | _____ | _____ |
| 13. Parents ethnic origin? | _____ | _____ |
| 14. Educational level (Grade) | _____ | _____ |
| 15. Further training? 1) Apprentice | _____ | _____ |
| 2) Vocational
or techni-
cal | _____ | _____ |
| 3) University | _____ | _____ |
| 16. Occupation of father (now or at death) | _____ | _____ |

17. Type of upbringing 1) Rural farm _____
2) Rural non-farm _____
3) Urban _____
18. Date of marriage? _____
19. Residence before marriage? _____
20. Occupation before marriage? _____
21. How many children do you have? Boys _____ Girls _____
22. How many still live at home? Boys _____ Girls _____
23. Of the ones living at home are the: 1) Pre-School? _____
2) School? _____ 3) Working? _____
24. If any of the children living at home are working,
what grade of school did they complete? _____
25. Occupation of working children living at home?

26. Location of their job? _____
27. What local organisations do you belong to? _____

28. What relatives do you have living within ten miles?

29. Have you ever considered moving? Yes _____ No _____
30. If 'yes' why? _____
31. What is preventing you from moving? _____
32. If not considered moving, why not? _____
33. Do you like living in the Goodfare district? Yes _____
No _____
34. Why? _____

Migrational Details (Children of Goodfare Residents)

35. Have any of your children left home? Yes _____ No _____

If 'no' exclude questions 35-46.

Eldest-----Youngest

1 2 3 4 5 6

36. Sons or daughters? _____

37. Age? _____

38. Birthplace ? _____

39. Marital status? _____

40. Educational level (grade)? _____

41. Further training (years)? _____

1) Apprentice _____

2) Vocational or technical _____

3) University _____

42. Age left home? _____

43. Present residence? _____

44. Occupation prior to leaving? _____

45. Present occupation? _____

46. Reason for leaving? _____

Occupational Details

47. What is your major occupation? _____

48. Did you engage in off-farm employment during 1968-69?

Yes _____ No _____. If 'yes' specify type _____

If 'no', state reason _____

49. How many days did you work off the farm in 1968-69?

50. What time of year was this? _____
51. Where did you work? (Distance from residence and location) _____
52. How did you get there? _____
53. Did it involve staying away from home? (State length of time.) _____
54. Did your wife work during 1968-69? Yes _____ No _____
55. If 'yes', Number of days? _____
56. Time of year? _____
57. Where? (Distance and location) _____
58. In which of the following gross income ranges did you fall last year?
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) under \$2,000 _____ | 4) \$5,000-\$7,499 _____ |
| 2) \$2,000-\$3,499 _____ | 5) \$7,500-\$9,999 _____ |
| 3) \$3,500-\$4,999 _____ | 6) \$10,000-\$14,999 _____ |
| | 7) over \$15,000 _____ |
59. What percentage of this comes from off-farm employment? _____
60. Did you or your wife receive any other form of income in 1968-69? (Specify type and amount) _____
61. How did you use the money earned off the farm last year? _____
62. Do you do the same amount of work each year? _____
63. If 'no' what affects this? _____
64. Do you do the same job each year? _____

65. How did you find out about your last job?

66. Are you willing to leave your family for an extended period of time in order to obtain off-farm employment?

Yes _____ No _____

67. What is the furthest you will go to obtain off-farm work? _____

68. If you had to give up farming what occupation would you choose? _____

69. Could you support your family adequately without doing off-farm work? Yes _____ No _____

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